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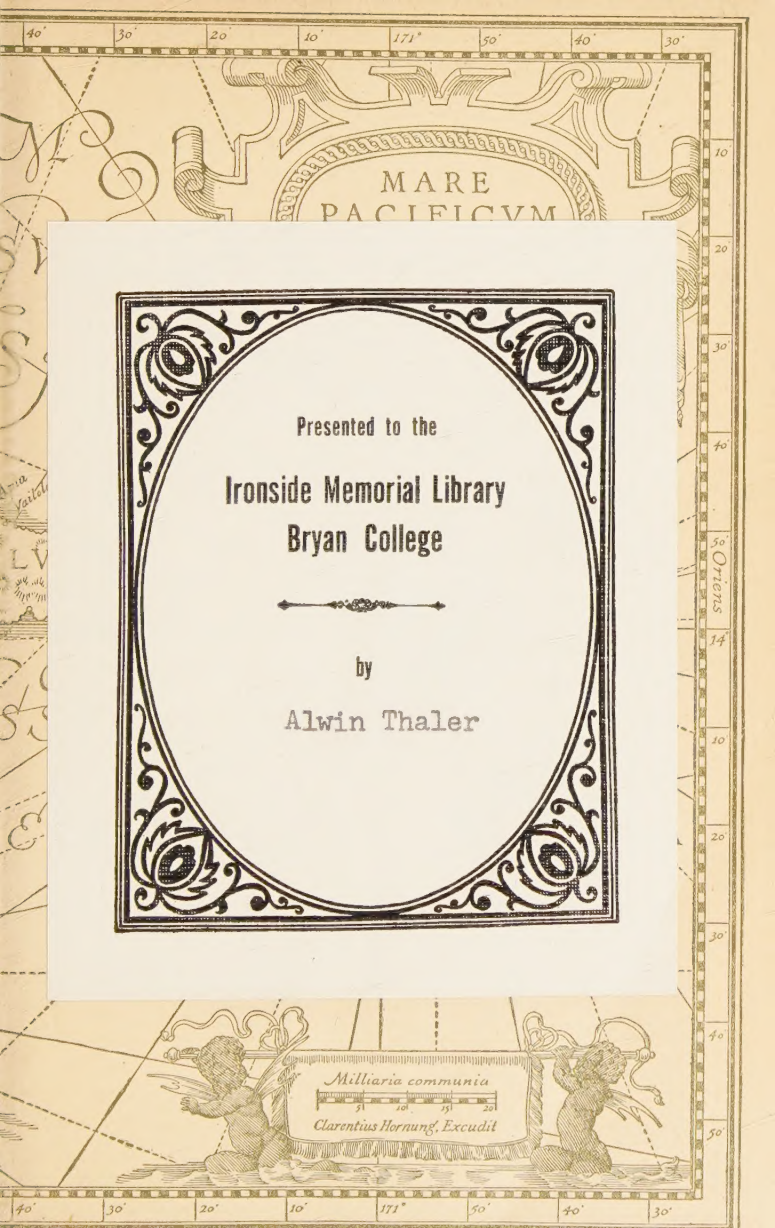

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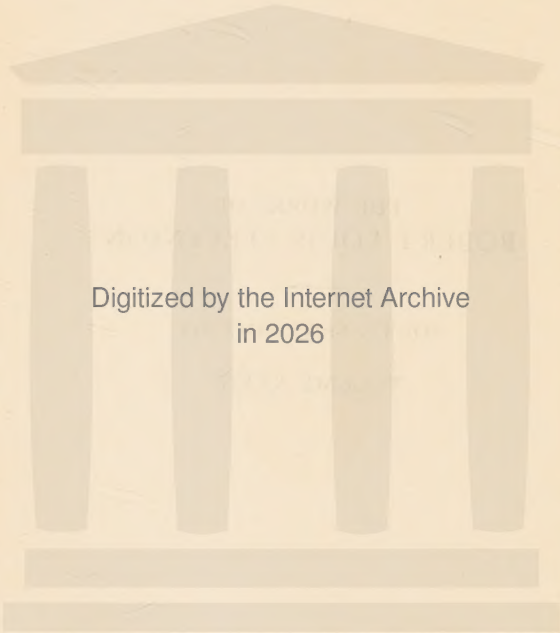

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ESSAYS ON LITERATURE, ON NATURE JUVENILIA

BY

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

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STEVENSON AT FORTY-THREE

By Lloyd Osbourne

THE photographs of Vailima show a large, and rather a gaunt, barn-like house, disappointingly lacking in picturesqueness. But the photographs, omitting nearly everything save the house, and often taken before the second half was added, convey a very false impression. Not only was it far more attractive than it looks, but it should be visualised in relation to its site, which was superb.

In front, sparkling above the leafy tree-tops, was the vast horizon of the sea; behind was the primeval forest; on one side, rising almost as sheerly as a wall, and densely wooded to its peak, was Mt. Vaea; on the other, the blue mountains of Atua in the distance. Not another house was visible; not a sign of cultivation except our own; Vailima seemed to stand alone on the island.

Directly in front of the house was a lawn, marked for two tennis-courts, and separated from the green paddock beyond by a long, dry-stone wall, which stretched in either direction for about a quarter of a mile. Both in this paddock, and on the land about the house were—here and there—magnificent trees, a hundred and fifty feet in height, which had been spared in clearing away the original forest and were so enormously buttressed at the base that they were eight or ten yards in circumference. A stream on one side of the clearing, splashed musically in a series of cascades, and ended—as far as we were concerned—in a glorious pool, as clear as crystal, in which we bathed.

There were mango-trees, round, dense, and faultlessly

symmetrical; glossy-leafed breadfruits, lemon trees, orange trees, and chiramoyas, with their prickly misshapen fruit, the size of a man's head; avocados with their delicious "pears"; cacao, with its bright red pods sprouting out of its trunk; exquisitely scented *moso'oi* trees, peculiar to Samoa, with their yellow, leaf-like flowers that bloomed thrice a year; pandanus, with its big red seeds that strung with a sweet-smelling wild creeper called *laumaile* were the favourite necklaces of the Samoans; and of course in profusion were the cocoanut palms and bananas, which with the breadfruits were in time to supply us with such a large part of our needs.

There were hedges of double hibiscus, perpetually in bloom, and studded thickly with crimson flowers, three inches across; hedges of fragrant lime-trees and so luxuriant that we gave away limes by the sackful; hedges of citrons; stately wild orange trees with hard, uneatable fruit, which cut open could be used as soap, especially for the hair which it made soft and silky; fences of living *fao* posts, which took root and sprouted into trees; *vineula*, with its pungent little transparent fruit; guavas; love-apples; papaias; *pasio* on arbours, with a fruit more delicious than strawberries; pineapples weighing from five to eighteen pounds; sweet potatoes that once planted continued to grow and spread without further care; pumpkins similarly growing like weeds; and below the verandahs plants of jasmine, tuberoses, and gardenias of a suffocating sweetness.

But it would be wrong to think of these as all jumbled together. They were not. In Vailima there was always a sense of spaciousness; of a big and lordly house set in a park; of wide vistas open to the sea and the breeze. About it all was a rich, glowing, and indescribable natural beauty, which never failed to cause a stranger to exclaim aloud; and being six hundred feet above the sea it had a delightfully fresh climate for so hot a country. The nights were usually cold, especially in the early hours of the morning, and a blanket was

essential. Our simple thermometer—a bottle of cocoanut oil—seldom failed to solidify nightly, which implied fifty-six degrees Fahrenheit.

Within the house the visitor's astonishment grew. Not only was the main hall extremely large, where a hundred people could dance with ease—but as R. L. S. had imported all his Bournemouth furniture, and much from his father's big house in Edinburgh, one might have thought oneself in civilisation, and not thousands of miles away on a remote island of the South Pacific. Pictures, napery, silver—all were in keeping; and except for the rack of rifles and the half-naked servants the illusion was complete; and to realise it to the full it must be remembered that all the other white people, even the highest officials, lived in a rather makeshift way, with the odds and ends they had picked up at auction, and very comfortlessly. Every official term ended in an auction, and often I would mark some attractive glasses or coffee-cups, or whatever it was, and say to myself: "I must buy those in when they are sold."

In contrast, the dignity, solidity, and air of permanence of Vailima was impressive. It dominated the country like a castle. Chiefs came from the furthest parts of Samoa just to gaze at it, and to be led in a hushed and awestricken tour of its wonders. When a Samoan said: "Like the house of Tusitala," he had reached the superlative. And in this setting, and soon familiar with the language, Stevenson gradually grew into a great feudal chieftain whose word carried weight in a great part of Samoa. I shall dwell but little on this animated and picturesque aspect of his life; of this literary Rajah Brooke, reaching out for empire; it is better told in his own letters, which are so vivid and full. But I should like to elucidate them a little—particularly in regard to the cost of it all.

Stevenson made a very large income, and spent it all on Vailima. His letters often show much anxiety about money, and some of his intimate correspondents

lectured him severely on his extravagance. Often he lectured himself, as the assiduous Stevensonian well knows; often in moments of depression he called Vailima his Abbotsford, and said he was ruining himself like Scott. But his concern ought not to be taken too seriously. Much of the money spent on Vailima was in the nature of capital investment; and once completed—had he never written another line—he could have lived there comfortably, and in no lessened state, on his income from royalties. Moreover, at his mother's death, he was to come into a very considerable inheritance from his father. While Vailima was undoubtedly a fantastic extravagance, it was at least within his means, and he had nothing really to fear from the future had he lived.

In recent years people have surprised me by asking, usually in a lowered voice: "Wasn't Stevenson very morose? Did he not have violent outbreaks of temper when it was unendurable to live with him? Was there the least truth in that idyllic life in Vailima?"

Like all slanders there is a germ of truth in this. There were times when Stevenson was terribly on edge with nerves; when he would fly into a passion over nothing; when jaded and weary he would give way to fits of irritability that were hard, indeed, to bear. But it must be remembered that he was one of the most unselfish, lofty-minded, and generous of men; there was no pettiness in him; nothing ignoble or mean. He was no petulant sick man raging at his family because one of his comforts had been overlooked. Rather was it the other way. He cared nothing for risk or danger, and went into it with an appalling unconcern. Of all things he hated most were anxious efforts to guard his health or make him comfortable. Once I tried to put a mattress on the almost bare boards he slept on. It was like disturbing a tiger! The mattress almost went out the window. Such passions were not without their humour, and afterwards Stevenson was often as ready to laugh over them as we.

How could anyone hold the least resentment against such a sorely tried and heroic man whose repentances were as impulsive as his outbreaks? No, the sad part of life in Vailima was the consciousness of that physical martyrdom; of that great, striving heart in so frail a body; the sight of that wistful face, watching us at tennis, which after but a single game had ended—for him—in a hemorrhage; the anguish which underlay that invincible optimism, and which at rare moments would become tragically apparent; the sense of a terrible and unequal struggle; the ineffable pity swelling in one's breast until it became almost insupportable.

That was the shadow of Vailima.

But it would be a mistake to think we were not gay. It was usually a very jolly party that sat round the big table; laughter abounded, and Stevenson in general was in excellent spirits. It was a point of honour with any of us going down to Apia to bring back a budget of news, and the merrier the better. And the little town, to anyone with a sense of humour, brimmed over with the ridiculous. One of its brightest phases was an old rascal without a penny to his name who used to write under the imposing letterhead of "The South Sea Trading and Plantation Company," to an endless series of wholesale houses, asking for shipments on credit. Scarcely a ship came in without a consignment from some victimised firm, and the loot—for it was nothing else—was sold at auction under a tree for half nothing. Consignments of ladies' hats; ten thousand ore-sacks in one shipment; tinned rabbit; agricultural machinery; peanut roasters; cutlery; window-shades; garden furniture; school desks—all was grist to the South Sea Trading and Plantation Company, which no storming consul nor outraged municipal president was ever able to curb.

If anyone became hopelessly insolvent in Apia it was often the custom to give him a municipal position, and divide his pay amongst his creditors. There was no prison for whites, and anyone condemned at a stately

consular trial, became forthwith a white elephant, and had to have a cottage rented for him, with all its ensuing absurdities. When one man became quite sure he was the rightful Duke of York, "the Beach" could think of no solution except to pass the hat round, and ship him off to Sydney—from which he promptly came back! Of such was our news, varied with a social and political gossip as entrancing as that of a great capital. Strangers would listen amazed at so much vivacious talk, especially were some great chief present and taking part, and wonder how we could find so much entertainment in a place that to them seemed the end of the world.

That Stevenson sometimes chafed against his enforced exile is only too true. There are passages in his letters that read very pathetically. But had his health improved, and had he returned to Europe, would he really have been content in some more pretentious "Skerryvore" or "La Solitude?" I cannot think so. His life of feudal splendour in Samoa would have seemed twice as resplendent in the retrospect; and in some French or Italian villa I believe he would have broken his heart to return. Samoa filled his need for the dramatic and the grandiose; he expanded on its teeming stage, where he could hold warriors in leash, and play Richelieu to half-naked kings. He had been touched by that most consuming of all ambitions—statecraft—and there was in him, hardly realised but emerging, the spirit of a great administrator, slowly bringing order out of chaos, and finding immeasurable joy in the task.

Sir George Grey, one the greatest of English proconsuls, appreciated this, when he said so earnestly at parting with Stevenson: "Go back; fight on, and never lose heart—for your place is in Samoa, and you must never think of leaving it."

Stevenson may not have been always happy in Vailima, but of one thing I am sure, he was happier there than he could have been in any place in the world.

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These papers appeared originally in the following publications:

I. *Scribner's Magazine,* September, 1888
II. *Scribner's Magazine,* January, 1915
III. *Scribner's Magazine,* July, 1888
IV. *The Contemporary Review,* April, 1885
V. *The Fortnightly Review,* April, 1881
VI. *The British Weekly,* May 13, 1887
VII. *The Magazine of Art,* November, 1883
VIII. *Scribner's Magazine,* June, 1888

ESSAYS ON LITERATURE

I

LETTER TO A YOUNG GENTLEMAN WHO PROPOSES TO EMBRACE THE CAREER OF ART

WITH the agreeable frankness of youth, you address me on a point of some practical importance to yourself and (it is even conceivable) of some gravity to the world: Should you or should you not become an artist? It is one which you must decide entirely for yourself; all that I can do is to bring under your notice some of the materials of that decision; and I will begin, as I shall probably conclude also, by assuring you that all depends on the vocation.

To know what you like is the beginning of wisdom and of old age. Youth is wholly experimental. The essence and charm of that unquiet and delightful epoch is ignorance of self as well as ignorance of life. These two unknowns the young man brings together again and again, now in the airiest touch, now with a bitter hug; now with exquisite pleasure, now with cutting pain; but never with indifference, to which he is a total stranger, and never with that near kinsman of indifference, contentment. If he be a youth of dainty senses or a brain easily heated, the interest of this series of experiments grows upon him out of all proportion to the pleasure he receives. It is not beauty that he loves, nor pleasure that he seeks, though he may think so; his design and his sufficient reward is to verify his own existence and taste the variety of human fate. To him, before the razor-edge of curiosity is dulled, all that is not actual living and the hot chase of experience wears

a face of a disgusting dryness difficult to recall in later days; or if there be any exception—and here destiny steps in—it is in those moments when, wearied or surfeited of the primary activity of the senses, he calls up before memory the image of transacted pains and pleasures. Thus it is that such an one shies from all cut-and-dry professions, and inclines insensibly toward the career of art which consists only in the tasting and recording of experience.

This, which is not so much a vocation for art as an impatience of all other honest trades, frequently exists alone; and so existing, it will pass gently away in the course of years. Emphatically, it is not to be regarded, it is not a vocation, but a temptation; and when your father the other day so fiercely and (in my view) so properly discouraged your ambition, he was recalling not improbably some similar passage in his own experience. For the temptation is perhaps nearly as common as the vocation is rare. But again we have vocations which are imperfect; we have men whose minds are bound up, not so much in any art, as in the general *ars artium* and common base of all creative work; who will now dip into painting, and now study counterpoint, and anon will be inditing a sonnet: all these with equal interest, all often with genuine knowledge. And of this temper, when it stands alone, I find it difficult to speak; but I should counsel such an one to take to letters, for in literature (which drags with so wide a net) all his information may be found some day useful, and if he should go on as he has begun, and turn at last into the critic, he will have learned to use the necessary tools. Lastly we come to those vocations which are at once decisive and precise; to the men who are born with the love of pigments, the passion of drawing, the gift of music, or the impulse to create with words, just as other and perhaps the same men are born with the love of hunting, or the sea, or horses, or the turning-lathe. These are predestined; if a man love the labour of any trade apart from any question of success or fame, the

gods have called him. He may have the general vocation too: he may have a taste for all the arts, and I think he often has; but the mark of his calling is this laborious partiality for one, this inextinguishable zest in its technical successes, and (perhaps above all) a certain candour of mind, to take his very trifling enterprise with a gravity that would befit the cares of empire, and to think the smallest improvement worth accomplishing at any expense of time and industry. The book, the statue, the sonata, must be gone upon with the unreasoning good faith and the unflagging spirit of children at their play. *Is it worth doing?*—when it shall have occurred to any artist to ask himself that question, it is implicitly answered in the negative. It does not occur to the child as he plays at being a pirate on the dining-room sofa, nor to the hunter as he pursues his quarry; and the candour of the one and the ardour of the other should be united in the bosom of the artist.

If you recognise in yourself some such decisive taste, there is no room for hesitation: follow your bent. And observe (lest I should too much discourage you) that the disposition does not usually burn so brightly at the first, or rather not so constantly. Habit and practice sharpen gifts; the necessity of toil grows less disgusting, grows even welcome in the course of years; a small taste (if it be only genuine) waxes with indulgence into an exclusive passion. Enough, just now, if you can look back over a fair interval, and see that your chosen art has a little more than held its own among the thronging interests of youth. Time will do the rest, if devotion help it; and soon your every thought will be engrossed in that beloved occupation.

But even with devotion, you may remind me, even with unfaltering and delighted industry, many thousand artists spend their lives, if the result be regarded, utterly in vain: a thousand artists, and never one work of art. But the vast mass of mankind are incapable of doing anything reasonably well, art among the rest.

The worthless artist would not improbably have been a quite incompetent baker. And the artist, even if he does not amuse the public, amuses himself; so that there will always be one man the happier for his vigils. This is the practical side of art: its inexpugnable fortress for the true practitioner. The direct returns—the wages of the trade—are small, but the indirect—the wages of the life—are incalculably great. No other business offers a man his daily bread upon such joyful terms. The soldier and the explorer have moments of a worthier excitement, but they are purchased by cruel hardships and periods of tedium that beggar language. In the life of the artist there need be no hour without its pleasure. I take the author, with whose career I am best acquainted; and it is true he works in a rebellious material, and that the act of writing is cramped and trying both to the eyes and the temper; but remark him in his study, when matter crowds upon him and words are not wanting—in what a continual series of small successes time flows by; with what a sense of power as of one moving mountains, he marshals his petty characters; what with pleasures, both of the ear and eye, he sees his airy structure growing on the page; and how he labours in a craft to which the whole material of his life is tributary, and which opens a door to all his tastes, his loves, his hatreds, and his convictions, so that what he writes is only what he longed to utter. He may have enjoyed many things in this big, tragic playground of the world; but what shall he have enjoyed more fully than a morning of successful work? Suppose it ill paid: the wonder is it should be paid at all. Other men pay, and pay dearly, for pleasures less desirable.

Nor will the practice of art afford you pleasure only; it affords besides an admirable training. For the artist works entirely upon honour. The public knows little or nothing of those merits in the quest of which you are condemned to spend the bulk of your endeavours. Merits of design, the merit of first-hand energy, the

merit of a certain cheap accomplishment which a man of the artistic temper easily acquires—these they can recognise, and these they value. But to those more exquisite refinements of proficiency and finish, which the artist so ardently desires and so keenly feels, for which (in the vigorous words of Balzac) he must toil "like a miner buried in a landslip," for which, day after day, he recasts and revises and rejects—the gross mass of the public must be ever blind. To those lost pains, suppose you attain the highest pitch of merit, posterity may possibly do justice; suppose, as is so probable, you fail by even a hair's breadth of the highest, rest certain they shall never be observed. Under the shadow of this cold thought, alone in his studio, the artist must preserve from day to day his constancy to the ideal. It is this which makes his life noble; it is by this that the practice of his craft strengthens and matures his character; it is for this that even the serious countenance of the great emperor was turned approvingly (if only for a moment) on the followers of Apollo, and that sternly gentle voice bade the artist cherish his art.

And here there fall two warnings to be made. First, if you are to continue to be a law to yourself, you must beware of the first signs of laziness. This idealism in honesty can only be supported by perpetual effort; the standard is easily lowered, the artist who says "*It will do,*" is on the downward path; three or four pot-boilers are enough at times (above all at wrong times) to falsify a talent, and by the practice of journalism a man runs the risk of becoming wedded to cheap finish. This is the danger on the one side; there is not less upon the other. The consciousness of how much the artist is (and must be) a law to himself, debauches the small heads. Perceiving recondite merits very hard to attain, making or swallowing artistic formulæ, or perhaps falling in love with some particular proficiency of his own, many artists forget the end of all art: to please. It is doubtless tempting to exclaim against the

ignorant bourgeois; yet it should not be forgotten, it is he who is to pay us, and that (surely on the face of it) for services that he shall desire to have performed. Here also, if properly considered, there is a question of transcendental honesty. To give the public what they do not want, and yet expect to be supported: we have there a strange pretension, and yet not uncommon, above all with painters. The first duty in this world is for a man to pay his way; when that is quite accomplished, he may plunge into what eccentricity he likes; but emphatically not till then. Till then, he must pay assiduous court to the bourgeois who carries the purse. And if in the course of these capitulations he shall falsify his talent, it can never have been a strong one, and he will have preserved a better thing than talent—character. Or if he be of a mind so independent that he cannot stoop to this necessity, one course is yet open: he can desist from art, and follow some more manly way of life.

I speak of a more manly way of life, it is a point on which I must be frank. To live by a pleasure is not a high calling; it involves patronage, however veiled; it numbers the artist, however ambitious, along with dancing-girls and billiard-markers. The French have a romantic evasion for one employment, and call its practitioners the Daughters of Joy. The artist is of the same family, he is of the Sons of Joy, chose his trade to please himself, gains his livelihood by pleasing others, and has parted with something of the sterner dignity of man. Journals but a little while ago declaimed against the Tennyson peerage; and this Son of Joy was blamed for condescension when he followed the example of Lord Lawrence and Lord Cairns and Lord Clyde. The poet was more happily inspired; with a better modesty he accepted the honour; and anonymous journalists have not yet (if I am to believe them) recovered the vicarious disgrace to their profession. When it comes to their turn, these gentlemen can do themselves more justice; and I shall be glad to think

of it; for to my barbarian eyesight, even Lord Tennyson looks somewhat out of place in that assembly. There should be no honours for the artist; he has already, in the practice of his art, more than his share of the rewards of life; the honours are pre-empted for other trades, less agreeable and perhaps more useful.

But the devil in these trades of pleasing is to fail to please. In ordinary occupations, a man offers to do a certain thing or to produce a certain article with a merely conventional accomplishment, a design in which (we may almost say) it is difficult to fail. But the artist steps forth out of the crowd and proposes to delight: an impudent design, in which it is impossible to fail without odious circumstances. The poor Daughter of Joy, carrying her smiles and finery quite unregarded through the crowd, makes a figure which it is impossible to recall without a wounding pity. She is the type of the unsuccessful artist. The actor, the dancer, and the singer must appear like her in person, and drain publicly the cup of failure. But though the rest of us escape this crowning bitterness of the pillory, we all court in essence the same humiliation. We all profess to be able to delight. And how few of us are! We all pledge ourselves to be able to continue to delight. And the day will come to each, and even to the most admired, when the ardour shall have declined and the cunning shall be lost, and he shall sit by his deserted booth ashamed. Then shall he see himself condemned to do work for which he blushes to take payment. Then (as if his lot were not already cruel) he must lie exposed to the gibes of the wreckers of the press, who earn a little bitter bread by the condemnation of trash which they have not read, and the praise of excellence which they cannot understand.

And observe that this seems almost the necessary end at least of writers. *Les Blancs et les Bleus* (for instance) is of an order of merit very different from *Le Vicomte de Bragelonne;* and if any gentleman can bear to spy upon the nakedness of *Castle Dangerous,*

his name I think is Ham: let it be enough for the rest of us to read of it (not without tears) in the pages of Lockhart. Thus in old age, when occupation and comfort are most needful, the writer must lay aside at once his pastime and his breadwinner. The painter indeed, if he succeed at all in engaging the attention of the public, gains great sums and can stand to his easel until a great age without dishonourable failure. The writer has the double misfortune to be ill-paid while he can work, and to be incapable of working when he is old. It is thus a way of life which conducts directly to a false position.

For the writer (in spite of notorious examples to the contrary) must look to be ill-paid. Tennyson and Montépin make handsome livelihoods; but we cannot all hope to be Tennyson, and we do not all perhaps desire to be Montépin. If you adopt an art to be your trade, weed your mind at the outset of all desire of money. What you may decently expect, if you have some talent and much industry, is such an income as a clerk will earn with a tenth or perhaps a twentieth of your nervous output. Nor have you the right to look for more; in the wages of the life, not in the wages of the trade, lies your reward; the work is here the wages. It will be seen I have little sympathy with the common lamentations of the artist class. Perhaps they do not remember the hire of the field labourer; or do they think no parallel will lie? Perhaps they have never observed what is the retiring allowance of a field officer; or do they suppose their contributions to the arts of pleasing more important than the services of a colonel? Perhaps they forget on how little Millet was content to live; or do they think, because they have less genius, they stand excused from the display of equal virtues? But upon one point there should be no dubiety: if a man be not frugal, he has no business in the arts. If he be not frugal, he steers directly for that last tragic scene of *le vieux saltimbanque;* if he be not frugal, he will find it hard to continue to be honest. Some day,

when the butcher is knocking at the door, he may be tempted, he may be obliged, to turn out and sell a slovenly piece of work. If the obligation shall have arisen through no wantonness of his own, he is even to be commended; for words cannot describe how far more necessary it is that a man should support his family, than that he should attain to—or preserve—distinction in the arts. But if the pressure comes through his own fault, he has stolen, and stolen under trust, and stolen (which is the worst of all) in such a way that no law can reach him.

And now you may perhaps ask me, if the débutant artist is to have no thought of money, and if (as is implied) he is to expect no honours from the State, he may not at least look forward to the delights of popularity? Praise, you will tell me, is a savoury dish. And in so far as you may mean the countenance of other artists, you would put your finger on one of the most essential and enduring pleasures of the career of art. But in so far as you should have an eye to the commendations of the public or the notice of the newspapers, be sure you would but be cherishing a dream. It is true that in certain esoteric journals the author (for instance) is duly criticised, and that he is often praised a great deal more than he deserves, sometimes for qualities which he prided himself on eschewing, and sometimes by ladies and gentlemen who have denied themselves the privilege of reading his work. But if a man be sensitive to this wild praise, we must suppose him equally alive to that which often accompanies and always follows it—wild ridicule. A man may have done well for years, and then he may fail; he will hear of his failure. Or he may have done well for years, and still do well, but the critics may have tired of praising him, or there may have sprung up some new idol of the instant, some "dust a little gilt," to whom they now prefer to offer sacrifice. Here is the obverse and the reverse of that empty and ugly thing called popularity. Will any man suppose it worth the gaining?

II

ON THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION[1]

YOU write to me, my dear sir, requesting advice at one of the most momentous epochs in a young man's life. You are about to choose a profession; and with a diffidence highly pleasing at your age, you would be glad, you say, of some guidance in the choice. There is nothing more becoming than for youth to seek counsel; nothing more becoming to age than to be able to

[1] The original manuscript of this essay lay for years in a bundle of old papers, and was always assumed to be the "Letter to a Young Gentleman Who Proposes to Embrace the Career of Art." Recently, however, a closer examination revealed it to be a hitherto unpublished piece of work, and for a while I was greatly mystified as to its origin and the reason for its suppression. Its general character, the peculiar quality of the paper, even the handwriting itself—all went to show it was composed in Saranac in the winter of 1887-88. But why had it been suppressed?

Then in the dim, halting way things recur to one, I began to recall its history. It had been adjudged too cynical, too sombre in tone, too out of keeping with the helpful philosophy always associated with R. L. S. Instead of assisting the Young Gentleman it was thought to be only too likely to discourage and depress him. Thus it was laid aside in favour of the other essay on the Career of Art. Whether we are right in publishing it now is for the public to decide. We seem to be going against the wishes of the author, who had evidently been content to leave it in oblivion; yet on the other hand it appears wrong to keep so fine an effort, and one so brilliant and grimly humorous, from the many who would find pleasure in it. After all, there are others to be considered besides Young Gentlemen; and perhaps with these warned away we shall incur no reproach from the general lovers of literature, but on the contrary gain their support and commendation in the course we have taken. [L. O.]

give it; and in a civilisation old and complicated like ours, where practical persons boast a kind of practical philosophy superior to all others, you would very naturally expect to find all such questions systematically answered. For the dicta of the Practical Philosophy, you come to me. What, you ask, are the principles usually followed by the wise in the like critical junctures? There, I confess, you pose me on the threshold. I have examined my own recollections; I have interrogated others; and with all the will in the world to serve you better, I fear I can only tell you that the wise, in these circumstances, act upon no principles whatever. This is disappointing to you; it was painful to myself; but if I am to declare the truth as I see it, I must repeat that wisdom has nothing to do with the choice of a profession.

We all know what people say, and very foolish it usually is. The question is to get inside of these flourishes, and discover what it is they think and ought to say: to perform, in short, the Socratic Operation.—The more ready-made answers there are to any question, the more abtruse it becomes; for those of whom we make the enquiry have the less need of consideration before they reply. The world being more or less beset with Anxious Enquirers of the Socratic persuasion, it is the object of a Liberal Education to equip people with a proper number of these answers by way of passport; so they can pass swimmingly to and fro on their affairs without the trouble of thinking. How should a banker know his own mind? It takes him all his time to manage his bank. If you saw a company of pilgrims, walking as if for a wager, each with his teeth set; and if you happened to ask them one after another: Whither they were going? and from each you were to receive the same answer: that positively they were all in such a hurry, they had never found leisure to enquire into the nature of their errand:—confess, my dear sir, you would be startled at the indifference they exhibited. Am I going too far, if I say, that this is

the condition of the large majority of our fellow-men and almost all our fellow-women?

I stop a banker.

"My good fellow," I say, "give me a moment."

"I have not a moment to spare," says he.

"Why?" I enquire.

"I must be banking," he replies. "I am so busily engaged in banking all day long that I have hardly leisure for my meals."

"And what," I continue my interrogatory, "is banking?"

"Sir," says he, "it is my business."

"Your business?" I repeat. "And what is a man's business?"

"Why," cries the banker, "a man's business is his duty." And with that he breaks away from me, and I see him skimming to his avocations.

But this is a sort of answer that provokes reflection. Is a man's business his duty? Or perhaps should not his duty be his business? If it is not my duty to conduct a bank (and I contend that it is not) is it the duty of my friend the banker? Who told him it was? Is it in the Bible? Is he sure that banks are a good thing? Might it not have been his duty to stand aside, and let some one else conduct the bank? Or perhaps ought he not to have been a ship-captain instead? All these perplexing queries may be summed up under one head: the grave problem which my friend offers to the world: Why is he a Banker?

Well, why is it? There is one principal reason, I conceive: that the man was trapped. Education, as practised, is a form of harnessing with the friendliest intentions. The fellow was hardly in trousers before they whipped him into school; hardly done with school before they smuggled him into an office; it is ten to one they have had him married into the bargain; and all this before he has had time so much as to imagine that there may be any other practicable course. Drum, drum, drum; you must be in time for school; you must

do your Cornelius Nepos; you must keep your hands clean; you must go to parties—a young man should make friends; and, finally—you must take this opening in a bank. He has been used to caper to this sort of piping from the first; and he joins the regiment of bank clerks for precisely the same reason as he used to go to the nursery at the stroke of eight. Then at last, rubbing his hands with a complacent smile, the parent lays his conjuring pipe aside. The trick is performed, ladies and gentlemen; the wild ass's colt is broken in; and now sits diligently scribing. Thus it is, that, out of men, we make bankers.

You have doubtless been present at the washing of sheep, which is a brisk, high-handed piece of manœuvring, in its way; but what is it, as a subject of contemplation, to the case of the poor young animal, Man, turned loose into this roaring world, herded by robustious guardians, taken with the panic before he has wit enough to apprehend its cause, and soon flying with all his heels in the van of the general stampede? It may be that in after years, he shall fall upon a train of reflection, and begin narrowly to scrutinise the reasons that decided his path and his continued mad activity in that direction. And perhaps he may be very well pleased at the retrospect, and see fifty things that might have been worse, for one that would have been better; and even supposing him to take the other cue, bitterly to deplore the circumstances in which he is placed and bitterly to reprobate the jockeying that got him into them, the fact is, it is too late to indulge such whims. It is too late, after the train has started, to debate the needfulness of this particular journey: the door is locked, the express goes tearing overland at sixty miles an hour; he had better betake himself to sleep or the daily paper, and discourage unavailing thought. He sees many pleasant places out of the window: cottages in a garden, angles by the riverside, balloons voyaging the sky; but as for him, he is booked for all his natural days, and must remain a banker to the end.

If the juggling only began with school-time, if even the domineering friends and counsellors had made a choice of their own, there might still be some pretension to philosophy in the affair. But no. They too were trapped; they are but tame elephants unwittingly ensnaring others, and were themselves ensnared by tame elephants of an older domestication. We have all learned our tricks in captivity, to the spiriting of Mrs. Grundy and a system of rewards and punishments. The crack of the whip and the trough of fodder: the cut direct and an invitation to dinner: the gallows and the Shorter Catechism: a pat upon the head and a stinging lash on the reverse: these are the elements of education and the principles of the Practical Philosophy. Sir Thomas Browne, in the earlier part of the Seventeenth Century, had already apprehended the staggering fact that geography is a considerable part of orthodoxy; and that a man who, when born in London, makes a conscientious Protestant, would have made an equally conscientious Hindu if he had first seen daylight in Benares. This is but a small part, however important, of the things that are settled for us by our place of birth. An Englishman drinks beer and tastes his liquor in the throat; a Frenchman drinks wine and tastes it in the front of the mouth. Hence, a single beverage lasts the Frenchman all afternoon; and the Englishman cannot spend above a very short time in a café, but he must swallow half a bucket. The Englishman takes a cold tub every morning in his bedroom; the Frenchman has an occasional hot bath. The Englishman has an unlimited family and will die in harness; the Frenchman retires upon a competency with three children at the outside. So this imperative national tendency follows us through all the privacies of life, dictates our thoughts, and attends us to the grave. We do nothing, we say nothing, we wear nothing, but it is stamped with the Queen's Arms. We are English down to our boots and into our digestions. There is not a dogma of all those by which we lead young men,

but we get it ourselves, between sleep and waking, between death and life, in a complete abeyance of the reasoning part.

"But how, sir," (you will ask) "is there then no wisdom in the world? And when my admirable father was this day urging me, with the most affecting expressions, to decide on an industrious, honest and lucrative employment——?" Enough, sir; I follow your thoughts, and will answer them to the utmost of my ability. Your father, for whom I entertain a singular esteem is, I am proud to believe, a professing Christian: the Gospel, therefore, is or ought to be his rule of conduct. Now, I am of course ignorant of the terms employed by your father; but I quote here from a very urgent letter, written by another parent, who was a man of sense, integrity, great energy, and a Christian persuasion, and who has perhaps set forth the common view with a certain innocent openness of his own:

"You are now come to that time of life," he writes to his son, "and have reason within yourself to consider the absolute necessity of making provision for the time when it will be asked, Who is this man? Is he doing any good in the world? Has he the means of being 'One of us'? I beseech you," he goes on, rising in emotion, and appealing to his son by name, "I beseech you do not trifle with this till it actually comes upon you. Bethink yourself and bestir yourself as a man. This is the time——" and so forth. This gentleman has candour; he is perspicacious, and has to deal apparently with a perspicacious pick-logic of a son; and hence the startling perspicacity of the document. But, my dear sir, what a principle of life! To "do good in the world" is to be received into a society, apart from personal affection. I could name many forms of evil vastly more exhilarating whether in prospect or enjoyment. If I scraped money, believe me, it should be for some more cordial purpose. And then, scraping money? It seems to me as if he had forgotten the Gospel. This is a view of life not quite the

same as the Christian, which the old gentleman professed and sincerely studied to practise. But upon this point, I dare dilate no further. Suffice it to say, that looking round me on the manifestations of this Christian society of ours, I have been often tempted to exclaim: What, then, is Antichrist?

A wisdom, at least, which professes one set of propositions and yet acts upon another, can be no very entire or rational ground of conduct. Doubtless, there is much in this question of money; and for my part, I believe no young man ought to be at peace till he is self-supporting, and has an open, clear life of it on his own foundation. But here a consideration occurs to me of, as I must consider, startling originality. It is this: That there are two sides to this question as well as to so many others. Make more?—Aye, or spend less? There is no absolute call upon a man to make any specific income, unless, indeed, he has set his immortal soul on being "One of us."

A thoroughly respectable income is as much as a man spends. A luxurious income, or true opulence, is something more than a man spends. Raise the income, lower the expenditure, and, my dear sir, surprising as it seems, we have the same result. But I hear you remind me, with pursed lips, of privations—of hardships. Alas! sir, there are privations upon either side; the banker has to sit all day in his bank, a serious privation; can you not conceive that the landscape painter, whom I take to be the meanest and most lost among contemporary men, truly and deliberately *prefers* the privations upon his side—to wear no gloves, to drink beer, to live on chops or even on potatoes, and lastly, not to be "One of us"—truly and deliberately prefers his privations to those of the banker? I can. Yes, sir, I repeat the words; I can. Believe me, there are Rivers in Bohemia!—but there is nothing so hard to get people to understand as this: That they *pay for their money;* and nothing so difficult to make them remember as this: That money, when they have

it, is for most of them, at least, only a cheque to purchase pleasure with. How then if a man gets pleasure in following an art? He might gain more cheques by following another; but then, although there is a difference in cheques, the amount of pleasure is the same. He gets some of his directly; unlike the bank clerk, he is having his fortnight's holiday, and doing what delights him, all the year.

All these patent truisms have a very strange air, when written down. But that, my dear sir, is no fault of mine or of the truisms. There they are. I beseech you, do not trifle with them. Bethink yourself like a man. This is the time.

But, you say, all this is very well; it does not help me to a choice. Once more, sir, you have me; it does not. What shall I say? A choice, let us remember, is almost more of a negative than a positive. You embrace one thing; but you refuse a thousand. The most liberal profession imprisons many energies and starves many affections. If you are in a bank, you cannot be much upon the sea. You cannot be both a first-rate violinist and a first-rate painter: you must lose in the one art if you persist in following both. If you are sure of your preference, follow it. If not—nay, my dear sir, it is not for me or any man to go beyond this point. God made you; not I. I cannot even make you over again. I have heard of a schoolmaster, whose specialty it was to elicit the bent of each pupil: poor schoolmaster, poor pupils! As for me, if you have nothing indigenous in your own heart, no living preference, no fine, human scorn, I leave you to the tide; it will sweep you somewhere. Have you but a grain of inclination, I will help you. If you wish to be a costermonger, be it, shame the devil; and I will stand the donkey. If you wish to be nothing, once more I leave you to the tide.

I regret profoundly, my dear young sir, not only for you in whom I see such a lively promise of the future, but for the sake of your admirable and truly worthy

father and your no less excellent mamma, that my remarks should seem no more conclusive. I can give myself this praise, that I have kept back nothing; but this, alas! is a subject on which there is little to put forward. It will probably not much matter what you decide upon doing; for most men seem to sink at length to the degree of stupor necessary for contentment in their different estates. Yes, sir, this is what I have observed. Most men are happy, and most men dishonest. Their mind sinks to the proper level; their honour easily accepts the custom of the trade. I wish you may find degeneration no more painful than your neighbours, soon sink into apathy, and be long spared in a state of respectable somnambulism, from the grave to which we haste.

R. L. S.

III

POPULAR AUTHORS

THE scene is the deck of an Atlantic liner, close by the doors of the ashpit, where it is warm: the time, night: the persons, an emigrant of an inquiring turn of mind and a deck hand. "Now," says the emigrant, "is there not any book that gives a true picture of a sailor's life?"—"Well," returns the other, with great deliberation and emphasis, "there is *one;* that is *just* a sailor's life. You know all about it, if you know that."—"What do you call it?" asks the emigrant.—"They call it *Tom Holt's Log*," says the sailor. The emigrant entered the fact in his note-book: with a wondering query as to what sort of stuff this *Tom Holt* would prove to be: and a double-headed prophecy that it would prove one of two things: either a solid, dull, admirable piece of truth, or mere ink and banditti. Well, the emigrant was wrong: it was something more curious than either, for it was a work by STEPHENS HAYWARD.

I

In this paper I propose to put the authors' names in capital letters; the most of them have not much hope of durable renown; their day is past, the poor dogs—they begin swiftly to be forgotten; and HAYWARD is of the number. Yet he was a popular writer; and what is really odd, he had a vein of hare-brained merit. There never was a man of less pretension; the intoxicating presence of an ink-bottle, which was too much for the strong head of Napoleon, left him sober and light-

hearted; he had no shade of literary vanity; he was never at the trouble to be dull. His works fell out of date in the days of printing. They were the unhatched eggs of Arab tales; made for word-of-mouth recitation, certain (if thus told) to captivate an audience of boys or any simple people—certain, on the lips of a generation or two of public story-tellers, to take on new merit and become cherished lore. Such tales as a man, such rather as a boy, tells himself at night, not without smiling, as he drops asleep; such, with the same exhilarating range of incident and the same trifling ingenuities, with no more truth to experience and scarcely more cohesion, HAYWARD told. If we so consider *The Diamond Necklace, or the Twenty Captains,* which is what I remember best of HAYWARD, you will find that staggering narrative grow quite conceivable.

A gentleman (his name forgotten—HAYWARD had no taste in names) puts an advertisement in the papers, inviting nineteen other gentlemen to join him in a likely enterprise. The nineteen appear promptly, nineteen, no more, no less: see the ease of the recumbent story-teller, half-asleep, hanging on the verge of that country of dreams, where candles come alight and journeys are accomplished at the wishing! These twenty, all total strangers, are to put their money together and form an association of strict equality: hence its name—*The Twenty Captains.* And it is no doubt very pleasant to be equal to anybody, even in name; and mighty desirable (at least in the eyes of young gentlemen hearing this tale in the school dormitory) to be called captain, even in private. But the deuce of it is, the founder has no enterprise in view, and here, you would think, the least wary capitalist would leave his chair, and buy a broom and a crossing with his money, rather than place it in the hands of this total stranger, whose mind by his own confession was a blank, and whose real name was probably Macaire. No such matter in the book. With the ease of dreaming, the association is founded; and again with the ease of dreaming (HAY-

WARD being now three parts asleep) the enterprise, in the shape of a persecuted heiress and a truly damnable and idiotic aristocrat, appears upon the scene. For some time, our drowsy story-teller dodges along upon the frontiers of incoherence, hardly at the trouble to invent, never at the trouble to write literature; but suddenly his interest brightens up, he sees something in front of him, turns on the pillow, shakes off the tentacles of slumber, and puts his back into his tale. Injured innocence takes a special train to Dover; damnable idiot takes another and pursues; the twenty captains reach the station five minutes after, and demand a third. It is against the rules, they are told; not more than two specials (here is good news for the railway traveller) are allowed at the same time upon the line. Is injured innocence, with her diamond necklace, to lie at the mercy of an aristocrat? Forbid it, Heaven and the Cheap Press! The twenty captains slip unobserved into the engine-house, steal an engine, and forth upon the Dover line! As well as I can gather, there were no stations and no pointsmen on this route to Dover, which must in consequence be quick and safe. One thing it had in common with other and less simple railways, it had a line of telegraph wires; and these the twenty captains decided to destroy. One of them, you will not be surprised to learn, had a coil of rope —in his pocket, I suppose; another—again I shall not surprise you—was an Irishman and given to blundering. One end of the line was made fast to a telegraph post; one (by the Irishman) to the engine: all aboard —full steam ahead—a double crash, and there was the telegraph post upon the ground, and here—mark my HAYWARD! was something carried away upon the engine. All eyes turn to see what it is: an integral part of the machinery! There is now no means of reducing speed; on thunders the engine, full steam ahead, down this remarkable route to Dover; on speed the twenty captains, not very easy in their minds. Presently, the driver of the second special (the aristocrat's) looks

behind him, sees an engine on his track, signals, signals in vain, finds himself being overhauled, pokes up his fire and—full steam ahead in flight. Presently after, the driver of the first special (injured innocence's) looks behind, sees a special on his track and an engine on the track of the special, signals, signals in vain, and he too—full steam ahead in flight. Such a day on the Dover line! But at last the second special smashes into the first, and the engine into both; and for my part, I think there was an end of that romance. But HAYWARD was by this time fast asleep; not a life was lost; not only that, but the various parties recovered consciousness and resumed their wild career (only now, of course, on foot and across country) in the precise original order: injured innocence leading by a length, damnable aristocrat with still more damnable valet (like one man) a good second, and the twenty captains (again like one man) a bad third; so that here was the story going on again just as before, and this appalling catastrophe on the Dover line reduced to the proportions of a morning call. The feelings of the company (it is true) are not dwelt upon.

Now, I do not mean that *Tom Holt* is quite such high-flying folly as *The Twenty Captains;* for it is no such thing, nor half so entertaining. Still it flowed from the same irresponsible brain; still it was the mere drowsy divagation of a man in bed, now tedious, now extravagant—always acutely untrue to life as it is, often pleasantly coincident with childish hopes of what life ought to be—as (for instance) in the matter of that little pleasure-boat, rigged, to very block and rope, as a full-rigged ship, in which Tom goes sailing—happy child! And this was the work that an actual tarry seaman recommended for a picture of his own existence!

II

It was once my fortune to have an interview with Mr. HAYWARD'S publisher: a very affable gentleman in

a very small office in a shady court off Fleet Street. We had some talk together of the works he issued and the authors who supplied them; and it was strange to hear him talk for all the world as one of our publishers might have talked of one of us, only with a more obliging frankness, so that the private life of these great men was more or less unveiled to me. So and so (he told me, among other things) had demanded an advance upon a novel, had laid out the sum (apparently on spirituous drinks) and refused to finish the work. "We had to put it in the hands of BRACEBRIDGE HEMMING," said the publisher with a chuckle: "he finished it." And then with conviction: "A most reliable author, BRACEBRIDGE HEMMING." I have no doubt the name is new to the reader; it was not so to me. Among these great men of the dust there is a touching ambition which punishes itself; not content with such glory as comes to them, they long for the glory of being bound—long to invade, between six boards, the homes of that aristocracy whose manners they so often find occasion to expose; and sometimes (once in a long lifetime) the gods give them this also, and they appear in the orthodox three volumes and are fleered at in the critical press, and lie quite unread in circulating libraries. One such work came in my mind: *The Bondage of Brandon,* by BRACEBRIDGE HEMMING. I had not found much pleasure in the volumes; but I was the more glad to think that Mr. Hemming's name was quite a household word, and himself quoted for "a reliable author," in his own literary circles.

On my way westward from this interview, I was aware of a first floor in Fleet Street rigged up with wire window-blinds, brass straps, and gilt lettering: Office for the sale of the works of PIERCE EGAN. "Ay, Mr. EGAN," thought I, "and have you an office all to yourself!" And then remembered that he too had once revelled in three volumes: *The Flower of the Flock* the book was called, not without pathos for the considerate mind; but even the flower of Egan's flock was not good

enough for the critics or the circulating libraries, so that I purchased my own copy, quite unread, for three shillings at a railway bookstall. Poor dogs, I thought, what ails you, that you should have the desire of this fictitious upper popularity, made by hack journalists and countersigned by yawning girls? Yours is the more true. Your butcher, the landlady at your seaside lodgings—if you can afford that indulgence, the barmaid whom you doubtless court, even the Rates and Taxes that besiege your door, have actually read your tales and actually know your names. There was a waiter once (or so the story goes) who knew not the name of Tennyson: that of HEMMING perhaps had brought the light into his eyes, or VILES perhaps, or ERRYM, or the great J. F. SMITH, or the unutterable Reynolds, to whom even here I must deny his capitals. —Fancy, if you can (thought I), that I languish under the reverse of your complaint; and being an upper-class author, bound and criticised, long for the penny number and the weekly woodcut!

Well, I know that glory now. I have tried and on the whole I have failed: just as EGAN and HEMMING failed in the circulating libraries. It is my consolation that Charles Reade nearly wrecked that valuable property, the *London Journal*, which must instantly fall back on Mr. Egan; and the king of us all, George Meredith, once staggered the circulation of a weekly newspaper. A servant-maid used to come and boast when she had read another chapter of *Treasure Island*: that any pleasure should attend the exercise never crossed her thoughts. The same tale, in a penny paper of a high class, was mighty coldly looked upon; by the delicate test of the correspondence column, I could see I was far to leeward; and there was one giant on the staff (a man with some talent, when he chose to use it) with whom I very early perceived it was in vain to rival. Yet I was thought well of on my penny paper for two reasons: one that the publisher was bent on raising the standard—a difficult enterprise in which he

has to a great extent succeeded; the other, because (like Bracebridge Hemmings) I was "a reliable author." For our great men of the dust are apt to be behind with copy.

III

How I came to be such a student of our penny press demands perhaps some explanation. I was brought up on *Cassell's Family Paper*; but the lady who was kind enough to read the tales aloud to me was subject to sharp attacks of conscience. She took the *Family Paper* on confidence; the tales it contained being Family Tales, not novels. But every now and then, something would occur to alarm her finer senses; she would express a well-grounded fear that the current fiction was "going to turn out a Regular Novel"; and the family paper, with my pious approval, would be dropped. Yet neither she nor I were wholly stoical; and when Saturday came round, we would study the windows of the stationer and try to fish out of subsequent woodcuts and their legends the further adventures of our favourites. Many points are here suggested for the casuist; the definitions of the Regular Novel and the Family Tale are to be desired; and quite a paper might be written on the relative merit of reading a fiction outright and lusting after it at the stationer's window. The experience at least had a great effect upon my childhood. This inexpensive pleasure mastered me. Each new Saturday I would go from one newsvendor's window to another's, till I was master of the weekly gallery and had thoroughly digested "The Baronet Unmasked," "So and so approaching the Mysterious House," "The Discovery of the Dead Body in the Blue Marl Pit," "Dr. Vargas Removing the Senseless Body of Fair Lilias," and whatever other snatch of unknown story and glimpse of unknown characters that gallery afforded. I do not know that I ever enjoyed fiction more; those books that we have (in such a way) avoided reading, are all so excellently written! And in early

years, we take a book for its material, and act as our own artists, keenly realising that which pleases us, leaving the rest aside. I never supposed that a book was to command me until, one disastrous day of storm, the heaven full of turbulent vapours, the streets full of the squalling of the gale, the windows resounding under bucketfuls of rain, my mother read aloud to me *Macbeth*. I cannot say I thought the experience agreeable; I far preferred the ditch-water stories that a child could dip and skip and doze over, stealing at times materials for play; it was something new and shocking to be thus ravished by a giant, and I shrank under the brutal grasp. But the spot in memory is still sensitive; nor do I ever read that tragedy but I hear the gale howling up the valley of the Leith.

All this while I would never buy upon my own account; pence were scarce, conscience busy; and I would study the pictures and dip into the exposed columns, but not buy. My fall was brought about by a truly romantic incident. Perhaps the reader knows Neidpath Castle, where it stands, bosomed in hills, on a green promontory; Tweed at its base running through all the gamut of a busy river, from the pouring shallow to the brown pool. In the days when I was thereabout, and that part of the earth was made a heaven to me by many things now lost, by boats, and bathing, and the fascination of streams, and the delights of comradeship, and those (surely the prettiest and simplest) of a boy and girl romance—in those days of Arcady there dwelt in the upper story of the castle one whom I believe to have been the gamekeeper on the estate. The rest of the place stood open to incursive urchins; and there, in a deserted chamber, we found some half-adozen numbers of *Black Bess, or the Knight of the Road*, a work by Edward Viles. So far as we are aware, no one had visited that chamber (which was in a turret) since Lambert blew in the doors of the fortress with contumelious English cannon. Yet it could hardly have been Lambert (in what-

ever hurry of military operations) who had left these samples of romance; and the idea that the gamekeeper had anything to do with them was one that we discouraged. Well, the offence is now covered by prescription; we took them away; and in the shade of a contiguous fir-wood, lying on blaeberries, I made my first acquaintance with the art of Mr. Viles. From this author, I passed on to MALCOLM J. ERRYM (the name to my present scrutiny suggesting an anagram on Merry), author of *Edith the Captive, The Treasures of St. Mark, A Mystery in Scarlet, George Barington, Sea-drift, Townsend the Runner,* and a variety of other well-named romances. Memory may play me false, but I believe there was a kind of merit about Errym. The *Mystery in Scarlet* runs in my mind to this day; and if any hunter after autographs (and I think the world is full of such) can lay his hands on a copy even imperfect, and will send it to me in the care of Messrs. Scribner, my gratitude (the muse consenting) will even drop into poetry. For I have a curiosity to know what the Mystery in Scarlet was, and to renew acquaintance with King George and his valet Norris, who were the chief figures in the work and may be said to have risen in every page superior to history and the ten commandments. Hence I passed on to Mr. EGAN, whom I trust the reader does not confuse with the author of *Tom and Jerry;* the two are quite distinct, though I have sometimes suspected they were father and son. I never enjoyed EGAN as I did ERRYM; but this *was* possibly a want of taste, and EGAN would do. Thence again I was suddenly brought face to face with Mr. Reynolds. A school-fellow, acquainted with my debasing tastes, supplied me with *The Mysteries of London,* and I fell back revolted. The same school-fellow (who seems to have been a devil of a fellow) supplied me about the same time with one of those contributions to literature (and even to art) from which the name of the publisher is modestly withheld. It was a far more respectable work than *The Mysteries of London.*

J. F. SMITH when I was a child, ERRYM when I was a boy, HAYWARD when I had attained to man's estate, these I read for pleasure; the others, down to SYLVANUS COBB, I have made it my business to know (as far as my endurance would support me) from a sincere interest in human nature and the art of letters.

IV

What kind of talent is required to please this mighty public? that was my first question, and was soon amended with the words, "if any." J. F. SMITH was a man of undeniable talent, ERRYM and HAYWARD have a certain spirit, and even in EGAN the very tender might recognise the rudiments of a sort of literary gift; but the cases on the other side are quite conclusive. Take Hemming, or the dull ruffian Reynolds, or Sylvanus Cobb, of whom perhaps I have only seen unfortunate examples—they seem not to have the talents of a rabbit, and why any one should read them is a thing that passes wonder. A plain-spoken and possibly high-thinking critic might here perhaps return upon me with my own expressions. And he would have missed the point. For I and my fellows have no such popularity to be accounted for. The reputation of an upper-class author is made for him at dinner-tables and nursed in newspaper paragraphs, and, when all is done, amounts to no great matter. We call it popularity, surely in a pleasant error. A flippant writer in the *Saturday Review* expressed a doubt if I had ever cherished a "genteel" illusion; in truth I never had many, but this was one—and I have lost it. Once I took the literary author at his own esteem; I behold him now like one of those gentlemen who read their own MS. descriptive poetry aloud to wife and babes around the evening hearth; addressing a mere parlour coterie and quite unknown to the great world outside the villa windows. At such pigmy reputation, Reynolds or COBB, or Mrs. SOUTHWORTH can afford to smile. By

spontaneous public vote, at a cry from the unorganic masses, these great ones of the dust were laurelled. And for what?

Ay, there is the question: For what? How is this great honour gained? Many things have been suggested. The people (it has been said) like rapid narrative. If so, the taste is recent, for both Smith and Egan were leisurely writers. It has been said they like incident, not character. I am not so sure. G. P. R. James was an upper-class author, J. F. Smith a penny pressman; the two are in some ways not unlike; but—here is the curiosity—James made far the better story, Smith was far the more successful with his characters. Each (to bring the parallel home) wrote a novel called *The Stepmother*; each introduced a pair of old maids; and let any one study the result! James's *Stepmother* is a capital tale, but Smith's old maids are like Trollope at his best. It is said again that the people like crime. Certainly they do. But the great ones of the dust have no monopoly of that, and their less fortunate rivals hammer away at murder and abduction unapplauded.

I return to linger about my seaman on the Atlantic liner. I shall be told he is exceptional. I am tempted to think, on the other hand, that he may be normal. The critical attitude, whether to books or life—how if that were the true exception? How if *Tom Holt's Log*, surreptitiously perused by a harbour-side, had been the means of sending my mariner to sea? How if he were still unconsciously expecting the Tom Holt part of the business to begin—perhaps to-morrow? How, even, if he had never yet awakened to the discrepancy between that singular picture and the facts? Let us take another instance. *The Young Ladies' Journal* is an elegant miscellany which I have frequently observed in the possession of the barmaid. In a lone house on a moorland, I was once supplied with quite a considerable file of this production and (the weather being violent) devoutly read it. The tales were not ill done;

they were well abreast of the average tale in a circulating library; there was only one difference, only one thing to remind me I was in the land of penny numbers instead of the parish of three volumes: Disguise it as the authors pleased (and they showed ingenuity in doing so) it was always the same tale they must relate: the tale of a poor girl ultimately married to a peer of the realm or (at the worst) a baronet. The circumstance is not common in life; but how familiar to the musings of the barmaid! The tales were not true to what men see; they were true to what the readers dreamed.

Let us try to remember how fancy works in children; with what selective partiality it reads, leaving often the bulk of the book unrealised, but fixing on the rest and living it; and what a passionate impotence it shows—what power of adoption, what weakness to create. It seems to be not much otherwise with uneducated readers. They long, not to enter into the lives of others, but to behold themselves in changed situations, ardently but impotently preconceived. The imagination (save the mark!) of the popular author here comes to the rescue, supplies some body of circumstance to these phantom aspirations, and conducts the readers where they will. Where they will: that's the point; elsewhere they will not follow. When I was a child, if I came on a book in which the characters wore armour, it fell from my hand; I had no criterion of merit, simply that one decisive taste, that my fancy refused to linger in the middle ages. And the mind of the uneducated reader is mailed with similar restrictions. So it is that we must account for a thing otherwise unaccountable: the popularity of some of these great ones of the dust. In defect of any other gift, they have instinctive sympathy with the popular mind. They can thus supply to the shop-girl and the shoe-black vesture cut to the pattern of their naked fancies, and furnish them with welcome scenery and properties for autobiographical romancing.

Even in readers of an upper class, we may perceive the traces of a similar hesitation; even for them a writer may be too exotic. The villain, even the heroine, may be a Feejee islander, but only on condition the hero is one of ourselves. It is pretty to see the thing reversed in the Arabian tale (Torrens or Burton—the tale is omitted in popular editions) where the Moslem hero carries off the Christian amazon; and in the exogamous romance, there lies interred a good deal of human history and human nature. But the question of exogamy is foreign to the purpose. Enough that we are not readily pleased without a character of our own race and language; so that, when the scene of a romance is laid on any distant soil, we look with eagerness and confidence for the coming of the English traveller. With the readers of the penny-press the thing goes further. Burning as they are to penetrate into the homes of the peerage, they must still be conducted there by some character of their own class, into whose person they cheerfully migrate for the time of reading. Hence the poor governesses supplied in the *Young Ladies' Journal*. Hence these dreary virtuous *ouvriers* and *ouvrières* of Xavier de Montépin. He can do nothing with them; and he is far too clever not to be aware of that. When he writes for the *Figaro*, he discards these venerable puppets and doubtless glories in their absence; but so soon as he must address the great audience of the halfpenny journal, out come the puppets and are furbished up, and take to drink again, and are once more reclaimed, and once more falsely accused. See them for what they are—Montépin's decoys; without these he could not make his public feel at home in the houses of the fraudulent bankers and the wicked dukes.

The reader, it has been said, migrates into such characters for the time of readings: under their name escapes the narrow prison of the individual career, and sates his avidity for other lives. To what extent he ever emigrates again, and how far the fancied careers

react upon the true one, it would fill another paper to debate. But the case of my sailor shows their grave importance. "Tom Holt does not apply to me," thinks our dully-imaginative boy by the harbour-side, "for I am not a sailor. But if I go to sea it will apply completely." And he does go to sea. He lives surrounded by the fact, and does not observe it. He cannot realise, he cannot make a tale of his own life; which crumbles in discrete impressions even as he lives it, and slips between the fingers of his memory like sand. It is not this that he considers in his rare hours of rumination, but that other life, which was all lit up for him by the humble talent of a Hayward—that other life which, God knows, perhaps he still believes that he is leading—the life of Tom Holt.

IV

ON SOME TECHNICAL ELEMENTS OF STYLE IN LITERATURE

THERE is nothing more disenchanting to man than to be shown the springs and mechanism of any art. All our arts and occupations lie wholly on the surface; it is on the surface that we perceive their beauty, fitness, and significance; and to pry below is to be appalled by their emptiness and shocked by the coarseness of the strings and pulleys. In a similar way, psychology itself, when pushed to any nicety, discovers an abhorrent baldness, but rather from the fault of our analysis than from any poverty native to the mind. And perhaps in æsthetics the reason is the same: those disclosures which seem fatal to the dignity of art seem so perhaps only in the proportion of our ignorance; and those conscious and unconscious artifices which it seems unworthy of the serious artist to employ were yet, if we had the power to trace them to their springs, indications of a delicacy of the sense finer than we conceive, and hints of ancient harmonies in nature. This ignorance at least is largely irremediable. We shall never learn the affinities of beauty, for they lie too deep in nature and too far back in the mysterious history of man. The amateur, in consequence, will always grudgingly receive details of method, which can be stated but never can wholly be explained; nay, on the principle laid down in *Hudibras*, that

> "Still the less they understand,
> The more they admire the sleight-of-hand."

many are conscious at each new disclosure of a diminution in the ardour of their pleasure. I must therefore warn that well-known character, the general reader, that I am here embarked upon a most distasteful business: taking down the picture from the wall and looking on the back; and, like the inquiring child, pulling the musical cart to pieces.

1. *Choice of Words.*—The art of literature stands apart from among its sisters, because the material in which the literary artist works is the dialect of life; hence, on the one hand, strange freshness and immediacy of address to the public mind, which is ready prepared to understand it; but hence, on the other, a singular limitation. The sister arts enjoy the use of a plastic and ductile material, like the modeller's clay; literature alone is condemned to work in mosaic with finite and quite rigid words. You have seen these blocks dear to the nursery: this one a pillar, that a pediment, a third a window or a vase. It is with blocks of just such arbitrary size and figure that the literary architect is condemned to design the palace of his art. Nor is this all; for since these blocks, or words, are the acknowledged currency of our daily affairs, there are here possible none of those suppressions by which other arts obtain relief, continuity, and vigour: no hieroglyphic touch, no smoothed impasto, no inscrutable shadow, as in painting; no blank wall, as in architecture; but every word, phrase, sentence, and paragraph must move in a logical progression, and convey a definite conventional import.

Now the first merit which attracts in the pages of a good writer, or the talk of a brilliant conversationalist, is the apt choice and contrast of the words employed. It is, indeed, a strange art to take these blocks, rudely conceived for the purpose of the market or the bar, and by tact of application touch them to the finest meanings and distinctions; restore to them their primal energy, wittily shift them to another issue, or make of them a drum to rouse the passions. But though this

form of merit is without doubt the most sensible and seizing, it is far from being equally present in all writers. The effect of words in Shakespeare, their singular justice, significance, and poetic charm, is different, indeed, from the effect of words in Addison or Fielding. Or, to take an example nearer home, the words of Carlyle seem electrified into an energy of lineament, like the faces of men furiously moved; whilst the words in Macaulay, apt enough to convey his meaning, harmonious enough in sound, yet glide from the memory like undistinguished elements in a general effect. But the first class of writers have no monopoly of literary merit. There is a sense in which Addison is superior to Carlyle; a sense in which Cicero is better than Tacitus, in which Voltaire excels Montaigne: it certainly lies not in the choice of words; it lies not in the interest or value of the matter; it lies not in force of intellect, or poetry, or of humour. The three first are but infants to the three second; and yet each, in a particular point of literary art, excels his superior in the whole. What is that point?

2. *The Web.*—Literature, although it stands apart by reason of the great destiny and general use of its medium in the affairs of men, is yet an art like other arts. Of these we may distinguish two great classes: those arts, like sculpture, painting, acting, which are representative, or as used to be said very clumsily, imitative; and those, like architecture, music, and the dance, which are self-sufficient, and merely presentative. Each class, in right of this distinction, obeys principles apart; yet both may claim a common ground of existence, and it may be said with sufficient justice that the motive and end of any art whatever, is to make a pattern; a pattern, it may be, of colours, of sounds, of changing attitudes, geometrical figures, or imitative lines; but still a pattern. That is the plane on which these sisters meet; it is by this that they are arts; and if it be well they should at times forget their childish origin, addressing their intelligence to virile

tasks, and performing unconsciously that necessary function of their life, to make a pattern, it is still imperative that the pattern shall be made.

Music and literature, the two temporal arts, contrive their pattern of sounds in time; or, in other words, of sounds and pauses. Communication may be made in broken words, the business of life be carried on with substantives alone; but that is not what we call literature; and the true business of the literary artist is to plait or weave his meaning, involving it around itself so that each sentence, by successive phrases, shall first come into a kind of knot, and then, after a moment of suspended meaning, solve and clear itself. In every properly constructed sentence there should be observed this knot or hitch; so that (however delicately) we are led to foresee, to expect, and then to welcome the successive phrases. The pleasure may be heightened by an element of surprise, as, very grossly, in the common figure of the antithesis, or, with much greater subtlety, where an antithesis is first suggested and then deftly evaded. Each phrase, besides, is to be comely in itself; and between the implication and the evolution of the sentence there should be a satisfying equipoise of sound; for nothing more often disappoints the ear than a sentence solemnly and sonorously prepared, and hastily and weakly finished. Nor should the balance be too striking and exact, for the one rule is to be infinitely various; to interest, to disappoint, to surprise, and yet still to gratify; to be ever changing, as it were, the stitch, and yet still to give the effect of an ingenious neatness.

The conjuror juggles with two oranges, and our pleasure in beholding him springs from this, that neither is for an instant overlooked or sacrificed. So with the writer. His pattern, which is to please the supersensual ear, is yet addressed, throughout and first of all, to the demands of logic. Whatever be the obscurities, whatever the intricacies of the argument, the neatness of the fabric must not suffer, or the artist has been

proved unequal to his design. And, on the other hand, no form of words must be selected, no knot must be tied among the phrases, unless knot and word be precisely what is wanted to forward and illuminate the argument; for to fail in this is to swindle in the game. The genius of prose rejects the *cheville* no less emphatically than the laws of verse; and the *cheville,* I should perhaps explain to some of my readers, is any meaningless or very watered phrase employed to strike a balance in the sound. Pattern and argument live in each other; and it is by the brevity, clearness, charm, or emphasis of the second, that we judge the strength and fitness of the first.

Style is synthetic; and the artist, seeking, so to speak, a peg to plait about, takes up at once two or more elements or two or more views of the subject in hand; combines, implicates, and contrasts them; and while, in one sense, he was merely seeking an occasion for the necessary knot, he will be found, in the other, to have greatly enriched the meaning, or to have transacted the work of two sentences in the space of one. In the change from the successive shallow statements of the old chronicler to the dense and luminous flow of highly synthetic narrative, there is implied a vast amount of both philosophy and wit. The philosophy we clearly see, recognising in the synthetic writer a far more deep and stimulating view of life, and a far keener sense of the generation and affinity of events. The wit we might imagine to be lost, but it is not so, for it is just that wit, these perpetual nice contrivances, these difficulties overcome, this double purpose attained, these two oranges kept simultaneously dancing in the air, that, consciously or not, afford the reader his delight. Nay, and this wit, so little recognised, is the necessary organ of that philosophy which we so much admire. That style is therefore the most perfect, not, as fools say, which is the most natural, for the most natural is the disjointed babble of the chronicler; but which attains the highest degree of elegant and preg-

nant implication unobtrusively; or if obtrusively, then with the greatest gain to sense and vigour. Even the derangement of the phrases from their (so-called) natural order is luminous for the mind; and it is by the means of such designed reversal that the elements of a judgment may be most pertinently marshalled, or the stages of a complicated action most perspicuously bound into one.

The web, then, or the pattern: a web at once sensuous and logical, an elegant and pregnant texture: that is style, that is the foundation of the art of literature. Books indeed continue to be read, for the interest of the fact or fable, in which this quality is poorly represented, but still it will be there. And, on the other hand, how many do we continue to peruse and reperuse with pleasure whose only merit is the elegance of texture? I am tempted to mention Cicero, and since Mr. Anthony Trollope is dead, I will. It is a poor diet for the mind, a very colourless and toothless "criticism of life"; but we enjoy the pleasure of a most intricate and dexterous pattern, every stitch a model at once of elegance and of good sense; and the two oranges, even if one of them be rotten, kept dancing with inimitable grace.

Up to this moment I have had my eye mainly upon prose; for though in verse also the implication of the logical texture is a crowning beauty, yet in verse it may be dispensed with. You would think that here was a death-blow to all I have been saying; and, far from that, it is but a new illustration of the principle involved. For if the versifier is not bound to weave a pattern of his own, it is because another pattern has been formally imposed upon him by the laws of verse. For that is the essence of a prosody. Verse may be rhythmical; it may be merely alliterative; it may, like the French, depend wholly on the (quasi) regular recurrence of the rhyme; or, like the Hebrew, it may consist in the strangely fanciful device of repeating the same idea. It does not matter on what principle the

law is based, so it be a law. It may be pure convention; it may have no inherent beauty; all that we have a right to ask of any prosody is, that it shall lay down a pattern for the writer, and that what it lays down shall be neither too easy nor too hard. Hence it comes that it is much easier for men of equal facility to write fairly pleasing verse than reasonably interesting prose; for in prose the pattern itself has to be invented, and the difficulties first created before they can be solved. Hence, again, there follows the peculiar greatness of the true versifier: such as Shakespeare, Milton, and Victor Hugo, whom I place beside them as versifier merely, not as poet. These not only knit and knot the logical texture of the style with all the dexterity and strength of prose; they not only fill up the pattern of the verse with infinite variety and sober wit; but they give us, besides, a rare and special pleasure, by the art, comparable to that of counterpoint, with which they follow at the same time, and now contrast, and now combine, the double pattern of the texture and the verse. Here the sounding line concludes; a little further on, the well-knit sentence; and yet a little further, and both will reach their solution on the same ringing syllable. The best that can be offered by the best writer of prose is to show us the development of the idea and the stylistic pattern proceed hand in hand, sometimes by an obvious and triumphant effort, sometimes with a great air of ease and nature. The writer of verse, by virtue of conquering another difficulty, delights us with a new series of triumphs. He follows three purposes where his rival followed only two; and the change is of precisely the same nature as that from melody to harmony. Or if you prefer to return to the juggler, behold him now, to the vastly increased enthusiasm of the spectators, juggling with three oranges instead of two. Thus it is: added difficulty, added beauty; and the pattern, with every fresh element, becoming more interesting in itself.

Yet it must not be thought that verse is simply an

addition; something is lost as well as something gained; and there remains plainly traceable, in comparing the best prose with the best verse, a certain broad distinction of method in the web. Tight as the versifier may draw the knot of logic, yet for the ear he still leaves the tissue of the sentence floating somewhat loose. In prose, the sentence turns upon a pivot, nicely balanced, and fits into itself with an obtrusive neatness like a puzzle. The ear remarks and is singly gratified by this return and balance; while in verse it is all diverted to the measure. To find comparable passages is hard; for either the versifier is hugely the superior of the rival, or, if he be not, and still persist in his more delicate enterprise, he fails to be as widely his inferior. But let us select them from the pages of the same writer, one who was ambidexter; let us take, for instance, Rumour's Prologue to the Second Part of *Henry IV.*, a fine flourish of eloquence in Shakespeare's second manner, and set it side by side with Falstaff's praise of sherris, act iv. scene i.; or let us compare the beautiful prose spoken throughout by Rosalind and Orlando; compare, for example, the first speech of all, Orlando's speech to Adam, with what passage it shall please you to select—the Seven Ages from the same play, or even such a stave of nobility as Othello's farewell to war; and still you will be able to perceive, if you have an ear for that class of music, a certain superior degree of organisation in the prose; a compacter fitting of the parts; a balance in the swing and the return as of a throbbing pendulum. We must not, in things temporal, take from those who have little, the little that they have; the merits of prose are inferior, but they are not the same; it is a little kingdom, but an independent.

3. *Rhythm of the Phrase.*—Some way back, I used a word which still awaits an application. Each phrase, I said, was to be comely; but what is a comely phrase? In all ideal and material points, literature, being a representative art, must look for analogies to painting and the like; but in what is technical and executive,

being a temporal art, it must seek for them in music. Each phrase of each sentence, like an air or a recitative in music, should be so artfully compounded out of long and short, out of accented and unaccented, as to gratify the sensual ear. And of this the ear is the sole judge. It is impossible to lay down laws. Even in our accentual and rhythmic language no analysis can find the secret of the beauty of a verse; how much less then, of those phrases, such as prose is built of, which obey no law but to be lawless and yet to please? The little that we know of verse (and for my part I owe it all to my friend Professor Fleeming Jenkin) is, however, particularly interesting in the present connection. We have been accustomed to describe the heroic line as five iambic feet, and to be filled with pain and confusion whenever, as by the conscientious schoolboy, we have heard our own description put in practice.

"All nìght | the dreàd | less àn | gel ùn | pursùed,"[1]

goes the schoolboy; but though we close our ears, we cling to our definition, in spite of its proved and naked insufficiency. Mr. Jenkin was not so easily pleased, and readily discovered that the heroic line consisted of four groups, or, if you prefer the phrase, contains four pauses:

"All night | the dreadless | angel | unpursued."

Four groups, each practically uttered as one word: the first, in this case, an iamb; the second, an amphibrachys; the third, a trochee; and the fourth, an amphimacer; and yet our schoolboy, with no other liberty but that of inflicting pain, had triumphantly scanned it as five iambs. Perceive, now, this fresh richness of intricacy in the web; this fourth orange, hitherto unremarked, but still kept flying with the others. What had

[1] Milton.

seemed to be one thing it now appears is two; and, like some puzzle in arithmetic, the verse is made at the same time to read in fives and to read in fours.

But again, four is not necessary. We do not, indeed, find verses in six groups, because there is not room for six in the ten syllables; and we do not find verses of two, because one of the main distinctions of verse from prose resides in the comparative shortness of the group; but it is even common to find verses of three. Five is the one forbidden number; because five is the number of the feet; and if five were chosen, the two patterns would coincide, and that opposition which is the life of verse would instantly be lost. We have here a clue to the effect of polysyllables, above all in Latin, where they are so common and make so brave an architecture in the verse; for the polysyllable is a group of Nature's making. If but some Roman would return from Hades (Martial, for choice), and tell me by what conduct of the voice these thundering verses should be uttered—"*Aut Lacedæmonium Tarentum*," for a case in point—I feel as if I should enter at last into the full enjoyment of the best of human verses.

But, again, the five feet are all iambic, or supposed to be; by the mere count of syllables the four groups cannot be all iambic; as a question of elegance, I doubt if any one of them requires to be so; and I am certain that for choice no two of them should scan the same. The singular beauty of verse analysed above is due, so far as analysis can carry us, part, indeed, to the clever repetition of L, D, and N, but part to this variety of scansion in the groups. The groups which, like the bar in music, break up the verse for utterance, fall uniambically; and in declaiming a so-called iambic verse, it may so happen that we never utter one iambic foot. And yet to this neglect of the original beat there is a limit.

"Athens, the eye of Greece, mother of arts,"[1]

[1] Milton.

is, with all its eccentricities, a good heroic line; for though it scarcely can be said to indicate the beat of the iamb, it certainly suggests no other measure to the ear. But begin

"Mother Athens, eye of Greece,"

or merely "Mother Athens," and the game is up, for the trochaic beat has been suggested. The eccentric scansion of the groups is an adornment; but as soon as the original beat has been forgotten, they cease implicitly to be eccentric. Variety is what is sought; but if we destroy the original mould, one of the terms of this variety is lost, and we fall back on sameness. Thus, both as to the arithmetical measure of the verse, and the degree of regularity in scansion, we see the laws of prosody to have one common purpose: to keep alive the opposition of two schemes simultaneously followed; to keep them notably apart, though still coincident; and to balance them with such judicial nicety before the reader, that neither shall be unperceived and neither signally prevail.

The rule of rhythm in prose is not so intricate. Here, too, we write in groups, or phrases, as I prefer to call them, for the prose phrase is greatly longer and is much more nonchalantly uttered than the group in verse; so that not only is there a greater interval of continuous sound between the pauses, but, for that very reason, word is linked more readily to word by a more summary enunciation. Still, the phrase is the strict analogue of the group, and successive phrases, like successive groups, must differ openly in length and rhythm. The rule of scansion in verse is to suggest no measure but the one in hand; in prose, to suggest no measure at all. Prose must be rhythmical, and it may be as much so as you will; but it must not be metrical. It may be anything, but it must not be verse. A single heroic line may very well pass and not disturb the somewhat larger stride of the prose style; but one following an-

other will produce an instant impression of poverty, flatness, and disenchantment. The same lines delivered with the measured utterance of verse would perhaps seem rich in variety. By the more summary enunciation proper to prose, as to a more distant vision, these niceties of difference are lost. A whole verse is uttered as one phrase; and the ear is soon wearied by a succession of groups identical in length. The prose writer, in fact, since he is allowed to be so much less harmonious, is condemned to a perpetually fresh variety of movement on a larger scale, and must never disappoint the ear by the trot of an accepted metre. And this obligation is the third orange with which he has to juggle, the third quality which the prose writer must work into his pattern of words. It may be thought perhaps that this is a quality of ease rather than a fresh difficulty; but such is the inherently rhythmical strain of the English language, that the bad writer—and must I take for example that admired friend of my boyhood, Captain Reid?—the inexperienced writer, as Dickens in his earlier attempts to be impressive, and the jaded writer, as any one may see for himself, all tend to fall at once into the production of bad blank verse. And here it may be pertinently asked, Why bad? And I suppose it might be enough to answer that no man ever made good verse by accident, and that no verse can ever sound otherwise than trivial when uttered with the delivery of prose. But we can go beyond such answers. The weak side of verse is the regularity of the beat, which in itself is decidedly less impressive than the movement of the nobler prose; and it is just into this weak side, and this alone, that our careless writer falls. A peculiar density and mass consequent on the nearness of the pauses is one of the chief good qualities of verse; but this our accidental versifier, still following after the swift gait and large gestures of prose, does not so much as aspire to imitate. Lastly, since he remains unconscious that he is making verse at all, it can never occur to him to

extract those effects of counterpoint and opposition which I have referred to as the final grace and justification of verse, and, I may add, of blank verse in particular.

4. *Contents of the Phrase.*—Here is a great deal of talk about rhythm—and naturally; for in our canorous language, rhythm is always at the door. But it must not be forgotten that in some languages this element is almost, if not quite, extinct, and that in our own it is probably decaying. The even speech of many educated Americans sounds the note of danger. I should see it go with something as bitter as despair, but I should not be desperate. As in verse no element, not even rhythm, is necessary, so, in prose also, other sorts of beauty will arise and take the place and play the part of those that we outlive. The beauty of the expected beat in verse, the beauty in prose of its larger and more lawless melody, patent as they are to English hearing, are already silent in the ears of our next neighbours; for France the oratorical accent and the pattern of the web have almost or altogether succeeded to their places; and the French prose writer would be astounded at the labours of his brother across the Channel, and how a good quarter of his toil, above all *invita Minerva,* is to avoid writing verse. So wonderfully far apart have races wandered in spirit, and so hard it is to understand the literature next door!

Yet French prose is distinctly better than English; and French verse, above all while Hugo lives, it will not do to place upon one side. What is more to our purpose, a phrase or a verse in French is easily distinguishable as comely or uncomely. There is then another element of comeliness hitherto overlooked in this analysis: the contents of the phrase. Each phrase in literature is built of sounds, as each phrase in music consists of notes. One sound suggests, echoes, demands, and harmonises with another; and the art of rightly using these concordances is the final art in literature. It used to be a piece of good advice to all young writers

to avoid alliteration; and the advice was sound, in so far as it prevented daubing. None the less for that was it abominable nonsense, and the mere raving of those blindest of the blind who will not see. The beauty of the contents of a phrase, or of a sentence, depends implicitly upon alliteration and upon assonance. The vowel demands to be repeated; the consonant demands to be repeated; and both cry aloud to be perpetually varied. You may follow the adventures of a letter through any passage that has particularly pleased you; find it, perhaps, denied awhile, to tantalise the ear; find it fired again at you in a whole broadside; or find it pass into congenerous sounds, one liquid or labial melting away into another. And you will find another and much stranger circumstance. Literature is written by and for two senses: a sort of internal ear, quick to perceive "unheard melodies"; and the eye, which directs the pen and deciphers the printed phrase. Well, even as there are rhymes for the eye, so you will find that there are assonances and alliterations; that where an author is running the open A, deceived by the eye and our strange English spelling, he will often show a tenderness for the flat A, and that where he is running a particular consonant, he will not improbably rejoice to write it down even when it is mute or bears a different value.

Here, then, we have a fresh pattern—a pattern, to speak grossly, of letters—which makes the fourth preoccupation of the prose writer, and the fifth of the versifier. At times it is very delicate and hard to perceive, and then perhaps most excellent and winning (I say perhaps); but at times again the elements of this literal melody stand more boldly forward and usurp the ear. It becomes, therefore, somewhat a matter of conscience to select examples; and as I cannot very well ask the reader to help me, I shall do the next best by giving him the reason or the history of each selection. The two first, one in prose, one in verse, I

chose without previous analysis, simply as engaging passages that had long re-echoed in my ear.

"I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat."[1] Down to "virtue," the current S and R are both announced and repeated unobtrusively, and by way of a grace-note that almost inseparable group PVF is given entire.[2] The next phrase is a period of repose, almost ugly in itself, both S and R still audible, and B given as the last fulfilment of PVF. In the next four phrases, from "that never" down to "run for," the mask is thrown off, and, but for a slight repetition of the F and V, the whole matter turns, almost too obtrusively, on S and R; first S coming to the front, and then R. In the concluding phrase all these favourite letters, and even the flat A, a timid preference for which is just perceptible, are discarded at a blow and in a bundle; and to make the break more obvious, every word ends with a dental, and all but one with T, for which we have been cautiously prepared since the beginning. The singular dignity of the first clause, and this hammer-stroke of the last, go far to make the charm of this exquisite sentence. But it is fair to own that S and R are used a little coarsely.

"In Xanadu did Kubla Khan	(KĂNDL)
A stately pleasure dome decree,	(KDLSR)
Where Alph the sacred river ran,	(KĂNDLSR)
Through caverns measureless to man,	(KĂNLSR)
Down to a sunless sea."[3]	(NDLS)

[1] Milton.

[2] As PVF will continue to haunt us through our English examples, take, by way of comparison, this Latin verse, of which it forms a chief adornment, and do not hold me answerable for the all-too-Roman freedom of the sense: "Hanc volo, quæ facilis, quæ palliolata vagatur."

[3] Coleridge.

Here I have put the analysis of the main group alongside the lines; and the more it is looked at, the more interesting it will seem. But there are further niceties. In lines two and four, the current S is most delicately varied with Z. In line three, the current flat A is twice varied with the open A, already suggested in line two, and both times ("where" and "sacred") in conjunction with the current R. In the same line F and V (a harmony in themselves, even when shorn of their comrade P) are admirably contrasted. And in line four there is a marked subsidiary M, which again was announced in line two. I stop from weariness, for more might yet be said.

My next example was recently quoted from Shakespeare as an example of the poet's colour sense. Now, I do not think literature has anything to do with colour, or poets anyway the better of such a sense; and I instantly attacked this passage, since "purple" was the word that had so pleased the writer of the article, to see if there might not be some literary reason for its use. It will be seen that I succeeded amply; and I am bound to say I think the passage exceptional in Shakespeare—exceptional, indeed, in literature; but it was not I who chose it.

"The BaRge she sat iN, like a BURNished throNe
BURNt oN the water: the POOP was BeateN gold, *per
PURPle the sails and so PUR* Fumèd that
The wiNds were love-sick with them."[1]

It may be asked why I have put the F of "perfumed" in capitals; and I reply, because this change from P to F is the completion of that from B to P, already so adroitly carried out. Indeed, the whole passage is a monument of curious ingenuity; and it seems scarce worth while to indicate the subsidiary S, L, and W. In the same article, a second passage from Shakespeare was quoted, once again as an example of his colour sense:

[1] *Antony and Cleopatra.*

"A mole cinque-spotted like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip."[1]

It is very curious, very artificial, and not worth while to analyse at length: I leave it to the reader. But before I turn my back on Shakespeare, I should like to quote a passage, for my own pleasure, and for a very model of every technical art:

'But in the wind and tempest of her frown,	W.P.V.[2]F.(st)(ow)
Distinction with a loud and powerful fan,	W.P.F.(st)(ow)L
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;	W.P.F.L.
And what hath mass and matter by itself	W.F.L.M.A.
Lies rich in virtue and unmingled."[3]	V.L.M.

From these delicate and choice writers I turned with some curiosity to a player of the big drum—Macaulay. I had in hand the two-volume edition, and I opened at the beginning of the second volume. Here was what I read:

"The violence of revolutions is generally proportioned to the degree of the maladministration which has produced them. It is therefore not strange that the government of Scotland, having been during many years greatly more corrupt than the government of England, should have fallen with a far heavier ruin. The movement against the last king of the house of Stuart was in England conservative, in Scotland destructive. The English complained not of the law, but of the violation of the law."

This was plain-sailing enough; it was our old friend PVF, floated by the liquids in a body; but as I read on, and turned the page, and still found PVF with his attendant liquids, I confess my mind misgave me utterly. This could be no trick of Macaulay's; it must be the nature of the English tongue. In a kind of despair, I turned half-way through the volume; and coming upon his lordship dealing with General Cannon,

[1] *Cymbeline.*
[2] The V is in "of."
[3] *Troilus and Cressida.*

and fresh from Claverhouse and Killiecrankie, here, with elucidative spelling, was my reward:

"Meanwhile the disorders of Kannon's Kamp went on inKreasing. He Kalled a Kouncil of war to Konsider what Kourse it would be advisable to taKe. But as soon as the Kouncil had met, a preliminary Kuestion was raised. The army was almost eKsKlusively a Highland army. The recent viKtory had been won eKsKlusively by Highland warriors. Great chiefs who had brought siKs or Seven hundred fighting men into the field did not think it fair that they should be outvoted by gentlemen from Ireland, and from the Low Kountries, who bore indeed King James's Kommission, and were Kalled Kolonels and Kaptains, but who were Kolonels without regiments and Kaptains without Kompanies."

A moment of FV in all this world of K's! It was not the English language, then, that was an instrument of one string, but Macaulay that was an incomparable dauber.

It was probably from this barbaric love of repeating the same sound, rather than from any design of clearness, that he acquired his irritating habit of repeating words; I say the one rather than the other, because such a trick of the ear is deeper-seated and more original in man than any logical consideration. Few writers, indeed, are probably conscious of the length to which they push this melody of letters. One, writing very diligently, and only concerned about the meaning of his words and the rhythm of his phrases, was struck into amazement by the eager triumph with which he cancelled one expression to substitute another. Neither changed the sense; both being monosyllables, neither could affect the scansion; and it was only by looking back on what he had already written that the mystery was solved: the second word contained an open A, and for nearly half a page he had been riding that vowel to the death.

In practice, I should add, the ear is not always so exacting; and ordinary writers, in ordinary moments, content themselves with avoiding what is harsh, and here and there, upon a rare occasion, buttressing a phrase, or linking two together, with a patch of assonance or a momentary jingle of alliteration. To understand how constant is this preoccupation of good writers, even where its results are least obtrusive, it is only necessary to turn to the bad. There, indeed, you will find cacophony supreme, the rattle of incongruous consonants only relieved by the jaw-breaking hiatus, and whole phrases not to be articulated by the powers of man.

Conclusion.—We may now briefly enumerate the elements of style. We have, peculiar to the prose writer, the task of keeping his phrases large, rhythmical, and pleasing to the ear, without ever allowing them to fall into the strictly metrical: peculiar to the versifier, the task of combining and contrasting his double, treble, and quadruple pattern, feet and groups, logic and metre —harmonious in diversity: common to both, the task of artfully combining the prime elements of language into phrases that shall be musical in the mouth; the task of weaving their argument into a texture of committed phrases and of rounded periods—but this particularly binding in the case of prose: and, again common to both, the task of choosing apt, explicit, and communicative words. We begin to see now what an intricate affair is any perfect passage; how many faculties, whether of taste or pure reason, must be held upon the stretch to make it; and why, when it is made, it should afford us so complete a pleasure. From the arrangement of according letters, which is altogether arabesque and sensual, up to the architecture of the elegant and pregnant sentence, which is a vigorous act of the pure intellect, there is scarce a faculty in man but has been exercised. We need not wonder, then, if perfect sentences are rare, and perfect pages rarer.

V

THE MORALITY OF THE PROFESSION OF LETTERS

THE profession of letters has been lately debated in the public prints; and it has been debated, to put the matter mildly, from a point of view that was calculated to surprise high-minded men, and bring a general contempt on books and reading. Some time ago, in particular, a lively, pleasant, popular writer[1] devoted an essay, lively and pleasant like himself, to a very encouraging view of the profession. We may be glad that his experience is so cheering, and we may hope that all others, who deserve it, shall be as handsomely rewarded; but I do not think we need be at all glad to have this question, so important to the public and ourselves, debated solely on the ground of money. The salary in any business under heaven is not the only, nor indeed the first, question. That you should continue to exist is a matter for your own consideration; but that your business should be first honest, and second useful, are points in which honour and morality are concerned. If the writer to whom I refer succeeds in persuading a number of young persons to adopt this way of life with an eye set singly on the livelihood, we must expect them in their works to follow profit only, and we must expect in consequence, if he will pardon me the epithets, a slovenly, base, untrue, and empty literature. Of that writer himself I am not speaking: he is diligent, clean and pleasing; we all owe him periods of entertainment, and he has achieved an

[1] Mr. James Payn.

amiable popularity which he has adequately deserved. But the truth is, he does not, or did not when he first embraced it, regard his profession from this purely mercenary side. He went into it, I shall venture to say, if not with any noble design, at least in the ardour of a first love; and he enjoyed its practice long before he paused to calculate the wage. The other day an author was complimented on a piece of work, good in itself and exceptionally good for him, and replied, in terms unworthy of a commercial traveller, that as the book was not briskly selling he did not give a copper farthing for its merit. It must not be supposed that the person to whom this answer was addressed received it as a profession of faith; he knew, on the other hand, that it was only a whiff of irritation; just as we know, when a respectable writer talks of literature as a way of life, like shoemaking, but not so useful, that he is only debating one aspect of a question, and is still clearly conscious of a dozen others more important in themselves and more central to the matter in hand. But while those who treat literature in this penny-wise and virtue-foolish spirit are themselves truly in possession of a better light, it does not follow that the treatment is decent or improving, whether for themselves or others. To treat all subjects in the highest, the most honourable, and the pluckiest spirit, consistent with the fact, is the first duty of a writer. If he be well paid, as I am glad to hear he is, this duty becomes the more urgent, the neglect of it the more disgraceful. And perhaps there is no subject on which a man should speak so gravely as that industry, whatever it may be, which is the occupation or delight of his life; which is his tool to earn or serve with; and which, if it be unworthy, stamps himself as a mere incubus of dumb and greedy bowels on the shoulders of labouring humanity. On that subject alone even to force the note might lean to virtue's side. It is to be hoped that a numerous and enterprising generation of writers will follow and surpass the present one; but it would be better if the stream

were stayed, and the roll of our old honest English books were closed, than that esurient book-makers should continue and debase a brave tradition, and lower, in their own eyes, a famous race. Better that our serene temples were deserted than filled with trafficking and juggling priests.

There are two just reasons for the choice of any way of life: the first is inbred taste in the chooser; the second some high utility in the industry selected. Literature, like any other art, is singularly interesting to the artist; and, in a degree peculiar to itself among the arts, it is useful to mankind. These are sufficient justifications for any young man or woman who adopts it as the business of his life. I shall not say much about the wages. A writer can live by his writing. If not so luxuriously as by other trades, then less luxuriously. The nature of the work he does all day will more affect his happiness than the quality of his dinner at night. Whatever be your calling and however much it brings you in the year, you could still, you know, get more by cheating. We all suffer ourselves to be too much concerned about a little poverty; but such considerations should not move us in the choice of that which is to be the business and justification of so great a portion of our lives; and like the missionary, the patriot, or the philosopher, we should all choose that poor and brave career in which we can do the most and best for mankind. Now Nature, faithfully followed, proves herself a careful mother. A lad, for some liking to the jingle of words, betakes himself to letters for his life; by-and-by, when he learns more gravity, he finds that he has chosen better than he knew; that if he earns little, he is earning it amply; that if he receives a small wage, he is in a position to do considerable services; that it is in his power, in some small measure to protect the oppressed and to defend the truth. So kindly is the world arranged, such great profit may arise from a small degree of human reliance on oneself, and such, in particular, is the happy star of this trade of writing, that

it should combine pleasure and profit to both parties, and be at once agreeable, like fiddling, and useful, like good preaching.

This is to speak of literature at its highest; and with the four great elders who are still spared to our respect and admiration, with Carlyle, Ruskin, Browning, and Tennyson before us, it would be cowardly to consider it at first in any lesser aspect. But while we cannot follow these athletes, while we may none of us, perhaps, be very vigorous, very original, or very wise, I still contend that, in the humblest sort of literary work, we have it in our power either to do great harm or great good. We may seek merely to please; we may seek, having no higher gift, merely to gratify the idle nine days' curiosity of our contemporaries; or we may essay, however feebly, to instruct. In each of these we shall have to deal with that remarkable art of words which, because it is the dialect of life, comes home so easily and powerfully to the minds of men; and since that is so, we contribute, in each of these branches, to build up the sum of sentiments and appreciations which goes by the name of Public Opinion or Public Feeling. The total of a nation's reading, in these days of daily papers, greatly modifies the total of the nation's speech; and the speech and reading, taken together, form the efficient educational medium of youth. A good man or woman may keep a youth some little while in clearer air; but the contemporary atmosphere is all-powerful in the end on the average of mediocre characters. The copious Corinthian baseness of the American reporter or the Parisian *chroniquer*, both so lightly readable, must exercise an incalculable influence for ill; they touch upon all subjects, and on all with the same ungenerous hand; they begin the consideration of all, in young and unprepared minds, in an unworthy spirit; on all, they supply some pungency for dull people to quote. The mere body of this ugly matter overwhelms the rare utterances of good men; the sneering, the selfish, and the cowardly are scattered in broad sheets on every

table, while the antidote, in small volumes, lies unread upon the shelf. I have spoken of the American and the French, not because they are so much baser, but so much more readable, than the English; their evil is done more effectively, in America for the masses, in French for the few that care to read; but with us as with them, the duties of literature are daily neglected, truth daily perverted and suppressed, and grave subjects daily degraded in the treatment. The journalist is not reckoned an important officer; yet judge of the good he might do, the harm he does; judge of it by one instance only: that when we find two journals on the reverse sides of politics each, on the same day, openly garbling a piece of news for the interest of its own party, we smile at the discovery (no discovery now!) as over a good joke and pardonable stratagem. Lying so open is scarce lying, it is true, but one of the things that we profess to teach our young is a respect for truth; and I cannot think this piece of education will be crowned with any great success, so long as some of us practice and the rest openly approve of public falsehood.

There are two duties incumbent upon any man who enters on the business of writing: truth to the fact and a good spirit in the treatment. In every department of literature, though so low as hardly to deserve the name, truth to the fact is of importance to the education and comfort of mankind, and so hard to preserve, that the faithful trying to do so will lend some dignity to the man who tries it. Our judgments are based upon two things: first, upon the original preferences of our soul; but, second, upon the mass of testimony to the nature of God, man, and the universe which reaches us, in divers manners, from without. For the most part these divers manners are reducible to one, all that we learn of past times and much that we learn of our own reaching us through the medium of books or papers, and even he who cannot read learning from the same source at second-hand and by the report of him who can. Thus the sum of the contemporary knowledge or

ignorance of good and evil is, in large measure, the handiwork of those who write. Those who write have to see that each man's knowledge is, as near as they can make it, answerable to the facts of life; that he shall not suppose himself an angel or a monster; nor take this world for a hell; nor be suffered to imagine that all rights are concentred in his own caste or country, or all veracities in his own parochial creed. Each man should learn what is within him, that he may strive to mend; he must be taught what is without him, that he may be kind to others. It can never be wrong to tell him the truth; for, in his disputable state, weaving as he goes his theory of life, steering himself, cheering or reproving others, all facts are of the first impotance to his conduct; and even if a fact shall discourage or corrupt him, it is still best that he should know it; for it is in this world as it is, and not in a world made easy by educational suppressions, that he must win his way to shame or glory. In one word, it must always be foul to tell what is false; and it can never be safe to suppress what is true. The very fact that you omit may be the fact which somebody was wanting, for one man's meat is another man's poison, and I have known a person who was cheered by the perusal of *Candide*. Every fact is a part of that great puzzle we must set together; and none that comes directly in a writer's path but has some nice relations, unperceivable by him, to the totality and bearing of the subject under hand. Yet there are certain classes of fact eternally more necessary than others, and it is with these that literature must first bestir itself. They are not hard to distinguish, nature once more easily leading us; for the necessary, because the efficacious, facts are those which are most interesting to the natural mind of man. Those which are coloured, picturesque, human, and rooted in morality, and those, on the other hand, which are clear, indisputable, and a part of science, are alone vital in importance, seizing by their interest, or useful to communicate. So far as the writer merely narrates, he

should principally tell of these. He should tell of the kind and wholesome and beautiful elements of our life; he should tell unsparingly of the evil and sorrow of the present, to move us with instances; he should tell of wise and good people in the past, to excite us by example; and of these he should tell soberly and truthfully, not glossing faults, that we may neither grow discouraged with ourselves nor exacting to our neighbours. So the body of contemporary literature, ephemeral and feeble in itself, touches in the minds of men the springs of thought and kindness, and supports them (for those who will go at all are easily supported) on their way to what is true and right. And if, in any degree, it does so now, how much more might it do so if the writers chose! There is not a life in all the records of the past but, properly studied, might lend a hint and a help to some contemporary. There is not a juncture in to-day's affairs but some useful word may yet be said of it. Even the reporter has an office, and, with clear eyes and honest language, may unveil injustices and point the way to progress. And for a last word: in all narration there is only one way to be clever, and that is to be exact. To be vivid is a secondary quality which must presuppose the first; for vividly to convey a wrong impression is only to make failure conspicuous.

But a fact may be viewed on many sides; it may be chronicled with rage, tears, laughter, indifference, or admiration, and by each of these the story will be transformed to something else. The newspapers that told of the return of our representatives from Berlin, even if they had not differed as to the facts, would have sufficiently differed by their spirits; so that the one description would have been a second ovation, and the other a prolonged insult. The subject makes but a trifling part of any piece of literature, and the view of the writer is itself a fact more important because less disputable than the others. Now this spirit in which a subject is regarded, important in all kinds of literary

work, becomes all-important in works of fiction, meditation, or rhapsody; for there it not only colours but itself chooses the facts; not only modifies but shapes the work. And hence, over the far larger proportion of the field of literature, the health or disease of the writer's mind or momentary humour forms not only the leading feature of his work, but is, at bottom, the only thing he can communicate to others. In all works of art, widely speaking, it is first of all the author's attitude that is narrated, though in the attitude there be implied a whole experience and a theory of life. An author who has begged the question and reposes in some narrow faith cannot, if he would, express the whole or even many of the sides of this various existence; for, his own life being maim, some of them are not admitted in his theory, and were only dimly and unwillingly recognised in his experience. Hence the smallness, the triteness, and the inhumanity in works of merely sectarian religion; and hence we find equal although unsimilar limitation in works inspired by the spirit of the flesh or the despicable taste for high society. So that the first duty of any man who is to write is intellectual. Designedly or not, he has so far set himself up for a leader of the minds of men; and he must see that his own mind is kept supple, charitable, and bright. Everything but prejudice should find a voice through him; he should see the good in all things; where he has even a fear that he does not wholly understand, there he should be wholly silent; and he should recognise from the first that he has only one tool in his workshop, and that tool is sympathy.[1]

The second duty, far harder to define, is moral. There are a thousand different humours in the mind, and about each of them, when it is uppermost, some litera-

[1] A footnote, at least, is due to the admirable example set before all young writers in the width of literary sympathy displayed by Mr. Swinburne. He runs forth to welcome merit, whether in Dickens or Trollope, whether in Villon, Milton, or Pope. This is, in criticism, the attitude we should all seek to preserve, not only in that, but in every branch of literary work.

ture tends to be deposited. Is this to be allowed? Not certainly in every case, and yet perhaps in more than rigourists would fancy. It were to be desired that all literary work, and chiefly works of art, issued from sound, human, healthy, and potent impulses, whether grave or laughing, humorous, romantic or religious. Yet it cannot be denied that some valuable books are partially insane; some, mostly religious, partially inhuman; and very many tainted with morbidity and impotence. We do not loathe a masterpiece although we gird against its blemishes. We are not, above all, to look for faults, but merits. There is no book perfect, even in design; but there are many that will delight, improve, or encourage the reader. On the one hand, the Hebrew psalms are the only religious poetry on earth; yet they contain sallies that savour rankly of the man of blood. On the other hand, Alfred de Musset had a poisoned and a contorted nature; I am only quoting that generous and frivolous giant, old Dumas, when I accuse him of a bad heart; yet when the impulse under which he wrote was purely creative, he could give us work like *Carmosine* or *Fantasio,* in which the last note of the romantic comedy seems to have been found again to touch and please us. When Flaubert wrote *Madame Bovary,* I believe he thought chiefly of a somewhat morbid realism; and behold! the book turned in his hands into a masterpiece of appalling morality. But the truth is, when books are conceived under a great stress, with a soul of ninefold power, nine times heated and electrified by effort, the conditions of our being are seized with such an ample grasp, that, even should the main design be trivial or base, some truth and beauty cannot fail to be expressed. Out of the strong comes forth sweetness; but an ill thing poorly done is an ill thing top and bottom. And so this can be no encouragement to knock-kneed, feeble-wristed scribes, who must take their business conscientiously or be ashamed to practise it.

Man is imperfect; yet, in his literature, he must express himself and his own views and preferences; for to do anything else is to do a far more perilous thing than to risk being immoral; it is to be sure of being untrue. To ape a sentiment, even a good one, is to travesty a sentiment; that will not be helpful. To conceal a sentiment, if you are sure you hold it, is to take a liberty with truth. There is probably no point of view possible to a sane man but contains some truth and, in the true connection, might be profitable to the race. I am not afraid of the truth, if any one could tell it to me, but I am afraid of parts of it impertinently uttered. There is a time to dance and a time to mourn; to be harsh as well as to be sentimental; to be ascetic as well as to glorify the appetities; and if a man were to combine all these extremes into his work, each in its place and proportion, that work would be the world's masterpiece of morality, as well as of art. Partiality is immorality; for any book is wrong that gives a misleading picture of the world and life. The trouble is that the weakling must be partial; the work of one proving dank and depressing; of another, cheap and vulgar; of a third, epileptically sensual; of a fourth, sourly ascetic. In literature as in conduct, you can never hope to do exactly right. All you can do is to make as sure as possible; and for that there is but one rule. Nothing should be done in a hurry that can be done slowly. It is no use to write a book and put it by for nine or even ninety years; for in the writing you will have partly convinced yourself; the delay must precede any beginning; and if you meditate a work of art, you should first long roll the subject under the tongue to make sure you like the flavour, before you brew a volume that shall taste of it from end to end; or if you propose to enter on the field of controversy, you should first have thought upon the question under all conditions, in health as well as in sickness, in sorrow as well as in joy. It is this nearness of examination necessary for any true and kind writing, that makes

practice of the art a prolonged and noble education for the writer.

There is plenty to do, plenty to say, or to say over again, in the meantime. Any literary work which conveys faithful facts or pleasing impressions is a service to the public. It is even a service to be thankfully proud of having rendered. The slightest novels are a blessing to those in distress, not chloroform itself a greater. Our fine old sea-captain's life was justified when Carlyle soothed his mind with *The King's Own* or *Newton Forster*. To please is to serve; and so far from its being difficult to instruct while you amuse, it is difficult to do the one thoroughly without the other. Some part of the writer or his life will crop out in even a vapid book, and to read a novel that was conceived with any force is to multiply experience and to exercise the sympathies. Every article, every piece of verse, every essay, every *entre-filet*, is destined to pass, however swiftly, through the minds of some portion of the public, and to colour, however transiently, their thoughts. When any subject falls to be discussed, some scribbler on a paper has the invaluable opportunity of beginning its discussion in a dignified and human spirit; and if there were enough who did so in our public press, neither the public nor the Parliament would find it in their minds to drop to meaner thoughts. The writer has the chance to stumble, by the way, on something pleasing, something interesting, something encouraging, were it only to a single reader. He will be unfortunate, indeed, if he suit no one. He has the chance, besides, to stumble on something that a dull person shall be able to comprehend; and for a dull person to have read anything and, for that once, comprehended it, makes a marking epoch in his education.

Here, then, is work worth doing and worth trying to do well. And so, if I were minded to welcome any great accession to our trade, it should not be from any reason of a higher wage, but because it was a trade which was useful in a very great and in a very high

degree; which every honest tradesman could make more serviceable to mankind in his single strength; which was difficult to do well and possible to do better every year; which called for scrupulous thought on the part of all who practised it, and hence became a perpetual education to their nobler natures; and which, pay it as you please, in the large majority of the best cases will still be underpaid. For surely at this time of the day in the nineteenth century, there is nothing that an honest man should fear more timorously than getting and spending more than he deserves.

VI

BOOKS WHICH HAVE INFLUENCED ME

THE Editor[1] has somewhat insidiously laid a trap for his correspondents, the question put appearing at first so innocent, truly cutting so deep. It is not, indeed, until after some reconnaissance and review that the writer awakes to find himself engaged upon something in the nature of autobiography, or, perhaps worse, upon a chapter in the life of that little, beautiful brother whom we once all had, and whom we have all lost and mourned, the man we ought to have been, the man we hoped to be. But when word has been passed (even to an editor), it should, if possible, be kept; and if sometimes I am wise and say too little, and sometimes weak and say too much, the blame must lie at the door of the person who entrapped me.

The most influential books, and the truest in their influence, are works of fiction. They do not pin the reader to a dogma which he must afterwards discover to be inexact; they do not teach him a lesson which he must afterwards unlearn. They repeat, they rearrange, they clarify the lessons of life; they disengage us from ourselves, they constrain us to the acquaintance of others; and they show us the web of experience, not as we can see it for ourselves, but with a singular change —that monstrous, consuming *ego* of ours being, for the nonce, struck out. To be so, they must be reasonably true to the human comedy; and any work that is so serves the turn of instruction. But the course of our education is answered best by those poems and romances

[1] Of the *British Weekly*.

where we breathe a magnanimous atmosphere of thought and meet generous and pious characters. Shakespeare has served me best. Few living friends have had upon me an influence so strong for good as Hamlet or Rosalind. The last character, already well beloved in the reading, I had the good fortune to see, I must think, in an impressionable hour, played by Mrs. Scott Siddons. Nothing has ever more moved, more delighted, more refreshed me; nor has the influence quite passed away. Kent's brief speech over the dying Lear had a great effect upon my mind, and was the burthen of my reflections for long, so profoundly, so touchingly generous did it appear in sense, so overpowering in expression. Perhaps my dearest and best friend outside of Shakespeare is D'Artagnan—the elderly D'Artagnan of the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*. I know not a more human soul, nor, in his way, a finer; I shall be very sorry for the man who is so much of a pedant in morals that he cannot learn from the Captain of Musketeers. Lastly, I must name the *Pilgrim's Progress*, a book that breathes of every beautiful and valuable emotion.

But of works of art little can be said; their influence is profound and silent, like the influence of nature; they mould by contact; we drink them up like water, and are bettered, yet know not how. It is in books more specifically didactic that we can follow out the effect, and distinguish and weigh and compare. A book which has been very influential upon me fell early into my hands, and so may stand first, though I think its influence was only sensible later on, and perhaps still keeps growing, for it is a book not easily outlived; the *Essais* of Montaigne. That temperate and genial picture of life is a great gift to place in the hands of persons of to-day; they will find in these smiling pages a magazine of heroism and wisdom, all of an antique strain; they will have their "linen decencies" and excited orthodoxies fluttered, and will (if they have any gift of reading) perceive that these have not been fluttered without some excuse and ground of reason; and

(again if they have any gift of reading) they will end by seeing that this old gentleman was in a dozen ways a finer fellow, and held in a dozen ways a nobler view of life than they or their contemporaries.

The next book, in order of time, to influence me, was the New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St. Matthew. I believe it would startle and move any one if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, not dron-ingly and dully like a portion of the Bible. Any one would then be able to see in it those truths which we are all courteously supposed to know and all modestly refrain from applying. But upon this subject it is perhaps better to be silent.

I come next to Whitman's *Leaves of Grass,* a book of singular service, a book which tumbled the world upside down for me, blew into space a thousand cobwebs of genteel and ethical illusion, and, having thus shaken my tabernacle of lies, set me back again upon a strong foundation of all the original and manly virtues. But it is, once more, only a book for those who have the gift of reading. I will be very frank—I believe it is so with all good books except, perhaps, fiction. The average man lives, and must live, so wholly in convention, that gunpowder charges of the truth are more apt to discompose than to invigorate his creed. Either he cries out upon blasphemy and indecency, and crouches the closer round that little idol of part-truths and part-conveniences which is the contemporary deity, or he is convinced by what is new, forgets what is old, and becomes truly blasphemous and indecent himself. New truth is only useful to supplement the old; rough truth is only wanted to expand, not to destroy, our civil and often elegant conventions. He who cannot judge had better stick to fiction and the daily papers. There he will get little harm, and, in the first at least, some good.

Close upon the back of my discovery of Whitman, I came under the influence of Herbert Spencer. No more persuasive rabbi exists, and few better. How

much of his vast structure will bear the touch of time, how much is clay and how much brass, it were too curious to inquire. But his words, if dry, are always manly and honest; there dwells in his pages a spirit of highly abstract joy, plucked naked like an algebraic symbol but still joyful; and the reader will find there a *caput-mortuum* of piety, with little indeed of its loveliness, but with most of its essentials; and these two qualities make him a wholesome, as his intellectual vigour makes him a bracing, writer. I should be much of a hound if I lost my gratitude to Herbert Spencer.

Goethe's Life, by Lewes, had a great importance for me when it first fell into my hands—a strange instance of the partiality of man's good and man's evil. I know no one whom I less admire than Goethe; he seems a very epitome of the sins of genius, breaking open the doors of private life and wantonly wounding friends, in that crowning offence of *Werther,* and in his own character a mere pen-and-ink Napoleon, conscious of the rights and duties of superior talents as a Spanish inquisitor was conscious of the rights and duties of his office. And yet in his fine devotion to his art, in his honest and serviceable friendship for Schiller, what lessons are contained! Biography, usually so false to its office, does here for once perform for us some of the work of fiction, reminding us, that is, of the truly mingled tissue of man's nature, and how huge faults and shining virtues cohabit and persevere in the same character. History serves us well to this effect, but in the originals not in the pages of the popular epitomiser, who is bound, by the very nature of his task, to make us feel the difference of epochs instead of the essential identity of man, and even in the originals only to those who can recognise their own human virtues and defects in strange form often inverted, and under strange names often interchanged. Martial is a poet of no good repute and it gives a man new thoughts to read his works dispassionately, and find in this unseemly jester's serious passages the image of a kind, wise, and self-

respecting gentleman. It is customary, I suppose, in reading Martial, to leave out these pleasant verses; I never heard of them, at least, until I found them for myself; and this partiality is one among a thousand things that help to build up our distorted and hysterical conception of the great Roman Empire.

This brings us by a natural transition to a very noble book—the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. The dispassionate gravity, the noble foregetfulness of self, the tenderness of others, that are there expressed and were practised on so great a scale in the life of its writer, make this book a book quite by itself. No one can read it and not be moved. Yet it scarcely or rarely appeals to the feelings—those very mobile, those not very trusty parts of man. Its address lies further back: its lesson comes more deeply home; when you have read, you carry away with you a memory of the man himself; it is as though you had touched a loyal hand, looked into brave eyes, and made a noble friend; there is another bond on you thenceforward, binding you to life and to the love of virtue.

Wordsworth should perhaps come next. Every one has been influenced by Wordsworth, and it is hard to tell precisely how. A certain innocence, a rugged austerity of joy, a sight of the stars, "the silence that is in the lonely hills," something of the cold thrill of dawn, cling to his work and give it a particular address to what is best in us. I do not know that you learn a lesson; you need not—Mill did not—agree with any one of his beliefs; and yet the spell is cast. Such are the best teachers: a dogma learned is only a new error—the old one was perhaps as good; but a spirit communicated is a perpetual possession. These best teachers climb beyond teaching to the plane of art; it is themselves, and what is best in themselves, that they communicate.

I should never forgive myself if I forgot *The Egoist*. It is art, if you like, but it belongs purely to didactic art, and from all the novels I have read (and I have read thousands) stands in a place by itself. Here is a

Nathan for the modern David; here is a book to send the blood into men's faces. Satire, the angry picture of human faults, is not great art; we can all be angry with our neighbour; what we want is to be shown, not his defects, of which we are too conscious, but his merits, to which we are too blind. And *The Egoist* is a satire; so much must be allowed; but it is a satire of a singular quality, which tells you nothing of that obvious mote, which is engaged from first to last with that invisible beam. It is yourself that is hunted down; these are your own faults that are dragged into the day and numbered, with lingering relish, with cruel cunning and precision. A young friend of Mr. Meredith's (as I have the story) came to him in an agony. "This is too bad of you," he cried. "Willoughby is me!" "No, my dear fellow," said the author; "he is all of us." I have read *The Egoist* five or six times myself, and I mean to read it again; for I am like the young friend of the anecdote—I think Willoughby an unmanly but a very serviceable exposure of myself.

I suppose, when I am done, I shall find that I have forgotten much that was most influential, as I see already I have forgotten Thoreau, and Hazlitt whose paper "On the Spirit of Obligations" was a turning-point in my life, and Pen whose little book of aphorisms had a brief but strong effect on me, and Mitford's *Tales of Old Japan*, wherein I learned for the first time the proper attitude of any rational man to his country's laws—a secret found, and kept, in the Asiatic islands. That I should commemorate all is more than I can hope or the Editor could ask. It will be more to the point, after having said so much upon improving books, to say a word or two about the improvable reader. The gift of reading, as I have called it, is not very common, nor very generally understood. It consists, first of all, in a vast intellectual endowment—a free grace, I find I must call it—by which a man rises to understand that he is not punctually right, nor those from whom he differs absolutely wrong. He may hold dog-

mas; he may hold them passionately; and he may know that others hold them but coldly, or hold them differently, or hold them not at all. Well, if he has the gift of reading, these others will be full of meat for him. They will see the other side of propositions and the other side of virtues. He need not change his dogma for that, but he may change his reading of that dogma, and he must supplement and correct his deductions from it. A human truth, which is always very much a lie, hides as much of life as it displays. It is men who hold another truth, or, as it seems to us, perhaps, a dangerous lie, who can extend our restricted field of knowledge, and rouse our drowsy consciences. Something that seems quite new, or that seems insolently false or very dangerous, is the test of a reader. If he tries to see what it means, what truth excuses it, he has the gift, and let him read. If he is merely hurt, or offended, or exclaims upon his author's folly, he had better take to the daily papers; he will never be a reader.

And here, with the aptest illustrative force, after I have laid down my part-truth, I must step in with its opposite. For, after all, we are vessels of a very limited content. Not all men can read all books; it is only in a chosen few that any man will find his appointed food; and the fittest lessons are the most palatable, and make themselves welcome to the mind. A writer learns this early, and it is his chief support; he goes on unafraid, laying down the law; and he is sure at heart that most of what he says is demonstrably false, and much of a mingled strain, and some hurtful, and very little good for service; but he is sure besides that when his words fall into the hands of any genuine reader, they will be weighed and winnowed, and only that which suits will be assimilated; and when they fall into the hands of one who cannot intelligently read, they come there quite silent and inarticulate, falling upon deaf ears, and his secret is kept as if he had not written.

VII

A NOTE ON REALISM

STYLE is the invariable mark of any master; and for the student who does not aspire so high as to be numbered with the giants, it is still the one quality in which he may improve himself at will. Passion, wisdom, creative force, the power of mystery or colour, are allotted in the hour of birth, and can be neither learned nor simulated. But the just and dexterous use of what qualities we have, the proportion of one part to another and to the whole, the elison of the useless, the accentuation of the important, and the preservation of a uniform character from end to end—these, which taken together constitute technical perfection, are to some degree within the reach of industry and intellectual courage. What to put in and what to leave out; whether some particular fact be organically necessary or purely ornamental; whether, if it be purely ornamental, it may not weaken or obscure the general design; and finally, whether, if we decide to use it, we should do so grossly and notably or in some conventional disguise: are questions of plastic style continually re-arising. And the sphinx that patrols the highways of executive art has no more unanswerable riddle to propound.

In literature (from which I must draw my instances) the great change of the past century has been effected by the admission of detail. It was inaugurated by the romantic Scott; and at length, by the semi-romantic Balzac and his more or less wholly unromantic followers, bound like a duty on the novelist. For some time it signified and expressed a more ample contem-

plation of the conditions of man's life; but it has recently (at least in France) fallen into a merely technical and decorative stage, which it is, perhaps, still too harsh to call survival. With a movement of alarm, the wiser or more timid begin to fall a little back from these extremities; they begin to aspire after a more naked, narrative articulation; after the succinct, the dignified, and the poetic; and as a means to this, after a general lightening of this baggage of detail. After Scott we beheld the starveling story—once, in the hands of Voltaire, as abstract as a parable—begin to be pampered upon facts. The introduction of these details developed a particular ability of hand; and that ability, childishly indulged, has led to the works that now amaze us on a railway journey. A man of the unquestionable force of M. Zola spends himself on technical successes. To afford a popular flavour and attract the mob, he adds a steady current of what I may be allowed to call the rancid. That is exciting to the moralist; but what more particularly interests the artist is this tendency of the extreme of detail, when fellowed as a principle, to degenerate into mere *feux-de-joie* of literary tricking. The other day even M. Daudet was to be heard babbling of audible colours and visible sounds.

This odd suicide of one branch of the realists may serve to remind us of the fact which underlies a very dusty conflict of the critics. All representative art, which can be said to live, is both realistic and ideal; and the realism about which we quarrel is a matter purely of externals. It is no especial cultus of nature and veracity, but a mere whim of veering fashion, that has made us turn our back upon the larger, more various, and more romantic art of yore. A photographic exactitude in dialogue is now the exclusive fashion; but even in the ablest hands it tells us no more—I think it even tells us less—than Molière, wielding his artificial medium, has told to us and to all time of Alceste or Orgon, Dorine or Chrysale. The historical novel is forgotten. Yet truth to the conditions of man's nature

and the conditions of man's life, the truth of literary art, is free of the ages. It may be told us in a carpet comedy, in a novel of adventure, or a fairy tale. The scene may be pitched in London, on the sea-coast of Bohemia, or away on the mountains of Beulah. And by an odd and luminous accident, if there is any page of literature calculated to awake the envy of M. Zola, it must be that *Troilus and Cressida* which Shakespeare, in a spasm of unmanly anger with the world, grafted on the heroic story of the siege of Troy.

This question of realism, let it be then clearly understood, regards not in the least degree the fundamental truth, but only the technical method, of a work of art. Be as ideal or as abstract as you please, you will be none the less veracious; but if you be weak, you run the risk of being tedious and inexpressive; and if you be very strong and honest, you may chance upon a masterpiece.

A work of art is first cloudily conceived in the mind; during the period of gestation it stands more clearly forward from these swaddling mists, puts on expressive lineaments, and becomes at length that most faultless, but also, alas! that incommunicable product of the human mind, a perfected design. On the approach to execution all is changed. The artist must now step down, don his working clothes, and become the artisan. He now resolutely commits his airy conception, his delicate Ariel, to the touch of matter; he must decide, almost in a breath, the scale, the style, the spirit, and the particularity of execution of his whole design.

The engendering idea of some works is stylistic; a technical preoccupation stands them instead of some robuster principle of life. And with these the execution is but play; for the stylistic problem is resolved beforehand, and all large originality of treatment wilfully foregone. Such are the verses, intricately designed, which we have learnt to admire, with a certain smiling admiration, at the hands of Mr. Lang and Mr. Dobson; such, too, are those canvases where dexterity or

even breadth of plastic style takes the place of pictorial nobility of design. So, it may be remarked, it was easier to begin to write *Esmond* than *Vanity Fair,* since, in the first, the style was dictated by the nature of the plan; and Thackerey, a man probably of some indolence of mind, enjoyed and got good profit of this economy of effort. But the case is exceptional. Usually in all works of art that have been conceived from within outwards, and generously nourished from the author's mind, the moment in which he begins to execute is one of extreme perplexity and strain. Artists of indifferent energy and an imperfect devotion to their own ideal make this ungrateful effort once for all; and, having formed a style, adhere to it through life. But those of a higher order cannot rest content with a process which, as they continue to employ it, must infallibly degenerate toward the academic and the cut-and-dried. Every fresh work in which they embark is the signal for a fresh engagement of the whole forces of their mind; and the changing views which accompany the growth of their experience are marked by still more sweeping alterations in the manner of their art. So that criticism loves to dwell upon and distinguish the varying periods of a Raphael, a Shakespeare, or a Beethoven.

It is, then, first of all, at this initial and decisive moment when execution is begun, and thenceforth only in a less degree, that the ideal and the real do indeed, like good and evil angels, contend for the direction of the work. Marble, paint, and language, the pen, the needle, and the brush, all have their grossnesses, their ineffable impotences, their hours, if I may so express myself, of insubordination. It is the work and it is a great part of the delight of any artist to contend with these unruly tools, and now by brute energy, now by witty expedient, to drive and coax them to effect his will. Given these means, so laughably inadequate, and given the interest, the intensity, and the multiplicity of the actual sensation whose effect he is to render

with their aid, the artist has one main and necessary resource which he must, in every case and upon any theory, employ. He must, that is, suppress much and omit more. He must omit what is tedious or irrelevant, and suppress what is tedious and necessary. But such facts as, in regard to the main design, subserve a variety of purposes, he will perforce and eagerly retain. And it is the mark of the very highest order of creative art to be woven exclusively of such. There, any fact that is registered is contrived a double or a treble debt to pay, and is at once an ornament in its place and a pillar in the main design. Nothing would find room in such a picture that did not serve, at once, to complete the composition, to accentuate the scheme of colour, to distinguish the planes of distance, and to strike the note of the selected sentiment; nothing would be allowed in such a story that did not, at the same time, expedite the progress of the fable, build up the characters, and strike home the moral or the philosophical design. But this is unattainable. As a rule, so far from building the fabric of our works exclusively with these, we are thrown into a rapture if we think we can muster a dozen or a score of them, to be the plums of our confection. And hence, in order that the canvas may be filled or the story proceed from point to point, other details must be admitted. They must be admitted, alas! upon a doubtful title; many without marriage robes. Thus any work of art, as it proceeds toward completion, too often—I had almost written always—loses in force and poignancy of main design. Our little air is swamped and dwarfed among hardly relevant orchestration; our little passionate story drowns in a deep sea of descriptive eloquence or slipshod talk.

But again, we are rather more tempted to admit those particulars which we know we can describe; and hence those most of all which, having been described very often, have grown to be conventionally treated in the practice of our art. These we choose, as the mason

chooses the acanthus to adorn his capital, because they come naturally to the accustomed hand. The old stock incidents and accessories, tricks of workmanship and schemes of composition (all being admirably good, or they would long have been forgotten) haunt and tempt our fancy, offer us ready-made but not perfectly appropriate solutions for any problem that arises, and wean us from the study of nature and the uncompromising practice of art. To struggle, to face nature, to find fresh solutions, and give expression to facts which have not yet been adequately or not yet elegantly expressed, is to run a little upon the danger of extreme self-love. Difficulty sets a high price upon achievement; and the artist may easily fall into the error of the French naturalists, and consider any fact as welcome to admission if it be the ground of brilliant handiwork; or, again, into the error of the modern landscape-painter, who is apt to think that difficulty overcome and science well displayed can take the place of what is, after all, the one excuse and breath of art—charm. A little further, and he will regard charm in the light of an unworthy sacrifice to prettiness, and the omission of a tedious passage as an infidelity to art.

We have now the matter of this difference before us. The idealist, his eye singly fixed upon the greater outlines, loves rather to fill up the interval with detail of the conventional order, briefly touched, soberly suppressed in tone, courting neglect. But the realist, with a fine intemperance, will not suffer the presence of anything so dead as a convention; he shall have all fiery, all hot-pressed from nature, all character and notable, seizing the eye. The style that befits either of these extremes, once chosen, brings with it its necessary disabilities and dangers. The immediate danger of the realist is to sacrifice the beauty and significance of the whole to local dexterity, or, in the insane pursuit of completion, to immolate his readers under facts; but he comes in the last resort, and as his energy declines, to discard all design, abjure all choice, and, with

scientific thoroughness, steadily to communicate matter which is not worth learning. The danger of the idealist is, of course, to become merely null and lose all grip of fact, particularity, or passion.

We talk of bad and good. Everything, indeed, is good which is conceived with honesty and executed with communicative ardour. But though on neither side is dogmatism fitting, and though in every case the artist must decide for himself, and decide afresh and yet afresh for each succeeding work and new creation; yet one thing may be generally said, that we of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, breathing as we do the intellectual atmosphere of our age, are more apt to err upon the side of realism than to sin in quest of the ideal. Upon that theory it may be well to watch and correct our own decisions, always holding back the hand from the least appearance of irrelevant dexterity, and resolutely fixed to begin no work that is not philosophical, passionate, dignified, happily mirthful, or, at the last and least, romantic in design.

VIII

SOME GENTLEMEN IN FICTION

I

TO make a character at all—so to select, so to describe a few acts, a few speeches, perhaps (though this is quite superfluous) a few details of physical appearance, as that these shall all cohere and strike in the reader's mind a common note of personality—there is no more delicate enterprise, success is nowhere less comprehensible than here. We meet a man, we find his talk to have been racy; and yet if every word were taken down by shorthand, we should stand amazed at its essential insignificance. Physical presence, the speaking eye, the inimitable commentary of the voice, it was in these the spell resided; and these are all excluded from the pages of the novel. There is one writer of fiction whom I have the advantage of knowing; and he confesses to me that his success in this matter (small though it be) is quite surprising to himself. "In one of my books," he writes, "and in one only, the characters took the bit in their mouth; all at once, they became detached from the flat paper, they turned their backs on me and walked off bodily; and from that time, my task was stenographic—it was they who spoke, it was they who wrote the remainder of the story. When this miracle of genesis occurred, I was thrilled with joyous surprise; I felt a certain awe—shall we call it superstitious? And yet how small a miracle it was; with what a partial life were my characters endowed; and when all was said, how little did I know of them! It was a form of words that they supplied

me with; it was in a form of words that they consisted; beyond and behind was nothing." The limitation, which this writer felt and which he seems to have deplored, can be remarked in the work of even literary princes. I think it was Hazlitt who declared that, if the names were dropped at press, he could restore any speech in Shakespeare to the proper speaker; and I daresay we could all pick out the words of Nym or Pistol, Caius or Evans; but not even Hazlitt could do the like for the great leading characters, who yet are cast in a more delicate mould, and appear before us far more subtly and far more fully differentiated, than these easy-going ventriloquial puppets. It is just when the obvious expedients of the barrel-organ vocabulary, the droll mispronunciation or the racy dialect, are laid aside, that the true masterpieces are wrought (it would seem) from nothing. Hamlet speaks in character, I potently believe it, and yet see not how. He speaks at least as no man ever spoke in life, and very much as many other heroes do in the same volume; now uttering the noblest verse, now prose of the most cunning workmanship; clothing his opinions throughout in that amazing dialect, Shakespeare. The opinions themselves, again, though they are true and forcible and reinforced with excellent images, are not peculiar either to Hamlet, or to any man or class or period; in their admirable generality of appeal resides their merit; they might figure, and they would be applauded, in almost any play and in the mouth of almost any noble and considerate character.—The only hint that is given as to his physical man—I speak for myself—is merely shocking, seems merely erroneous, and is perhaps best explained away upon the theory that Shakespeare had Burbage more directly in his eye than Hamlet. As for what the Prince does and what he refrains from doing, all acts and passions are strangely impersonal. A thousand characters, as different among themselves as night from day, should yet, under the like stress of circumstance, have trodden punctually in the footprints of Hamlet

and each other. Have you read *André Cornélis?* in which M. Bourget handled over again but yesterday the theme of *Hamlet,* even as Godwin had already rehandled part of it in *Caleb Williams.* You can see the character M. Bourget means with quite sufficient clearness; it is not a masterpiece, but it is adequately indicated; and the character is proper to the part, these acts and passions fit him like a glove, he carries the tale, not with so good a grace as Hamlet, but with equal nature. Well, the two personalities are fundamentally distinct; they breathe upon us out of different worlds; in face, in touch, in the subtle atmosphere by which we recognise an individual, in all that goes to build up a character—or at least that shadowy thing, a character in a book—they are even opposed: the same fate involves them, they behave on the same lines, and they have not one hair in common. What, then, remains of Hamlet? and by what magic does he stand forth in our brains, *teres atque rotundus,* solid to the touch, a man to praise, to blame, to pity, ay, and to love?

At bottom, what we hate or love is doubtless some projection of the author; the personal atmosphere is doubtless his; and when we think we know Hamlet, we know but a side of his creator. It is a good old comfortable doctrine, which our fathers have taken for a pillow, which has served as a cradle for ourselves; and yet, in some of its applications, it brings us face to face with difficulties. I said last month that we could tell a gentleman in a novel. Let us continue to take Hamlet. Manners vary, they invert themselves, from age to age; Shakespeare's gentlemen are not quite ours, there is no doubt their talk would raise a flutter in a modern tea-party; but in the old pious phrase, they have the root of the matter. All the most beautiful traits of the gentleman adorn this character of Hamlet: it was the side on which Salvini seized, which he so attractively displayed, with which he led theatres captive; it is the side, I think, by which the Prince endears

himself to readers. It is true there is one staggering scene, the great scene with his mother. But we must regard this as the author's lost battle; here it was that Shakespeare failed: what to do with the Queen, how to depict her, how to make Hamlet use her, these (as we know) were his miserable problem; it beat him; he faced it with an indecision worthy of his hero; he shifted, he shuffled with it; in the end, he may be said to have left his paper blank. One reason why we do not more generally recognise this failure of Shakespeare's is because we have most of us seen the play performed; and managers, by what seems a stroke of art, by what is really (I dare say) a fortunate necessity, smuggle the problem out of sight—the play, too, for the matter of that; but the glamour of the footlights and the charm of that little strip of fiddler's heads and elbows, conceal the conjuring. This stroke of art (let me call it so) consists in casting the Queen as an old woman. Thanks to the footlights and the fiddlers' heads, we never pause to inquire why the King should have pawned his soul for this college-bedmaker in masquerade; and thanks to the absurdity of the whole position, and that unconscious unchivalry of audiences (ay, and of authors also) to old women, Hamlet's monstrous conduct passes unobserved or unresented. Were the Queen cast as she should be, a woman still young and beautiful, had she been coherently written by Shakespeare, and were she played with any spirit, even an audience would rise.

But the scene is simply false, effective on the stage, untrue of any son or any mother; in judging the character of Hamlet, it must be left upon one side; and in all other relations we recognise the Prince for a gentleman.

Now, if the personal charm of any verbal puppet be indeed only an emanation from its author, may we conclude, since we feel Hamlet to be a gentleman, that Shakespeare was one too? An instructive parallel occurs. There were in England two writers of fiction,

contemporaries, rivals in fame, opposites in character; one descended from a great house, easy, generous, witty, debauched, a favourite in the tap-room and the hunting field, yet withal a man of a high practical intelligence, a distinguished public servant, an ornament of the bench: the other, sprung from I know not whence—but not from kings—buzzed about by second-rate women, and their fit companion, a tea-bibber in parlours, a man of painful propriety, with all the narrowness and much of the animosity of the backshop and the dissenting chapel. Take the pair, they seem like types: Fielding, with all his faults, was undeniably a gentleman; Richardson, with all his genius and his virtues, as undeniably was not. And now turn to their works. In *Tom Jones,* a novel of which the respectable profess that they could stand the dulness if it were not so blackguardly, and the more honest admit they could forgive the blackguardism if it were not so dull—in *Tom Jones,* with its voluminous bulk and troops of characters, there is no shadow of a gentleman, for Allworthy is only ink and paper. In *Joseph Andrews,* I fear I have always confined my reading to the parson; and Mr. Adams, delightful as he is, has no pretension "to the genteel." In *Amelia,* things get better; all things get better; it is one of the curiosities of literature that Fielding, who wrote one book that was engaging, truthful, kind, and clean, and another book that was dirty, dull, and false, should be spoken of, the world over, as the author of the second and not the first, as the author of *Tom Jones,* not of *Amelia.* And in *Amelia,* sure enough, we find some gentlefolk; Booth and Dr. Harrison will pass in a crowd, I dare not say they will do more. It is very differently that one must speak of Richardson's creations. With Sir Charles Grandison I am unacquainted—there are many impediments in this brief life of man; I have more than once, indeed, reconnoitred the first volume with a flying party, but always decided not to break ground before the place till my siege guns came up; and it's an odd thing—I have been

all these years in the field, and that powerful artillery is still miles in the rear. The day it overtakes me, Baron Gibbon's fortress shall be beat about his ears, and my flag be planted on the formidable ramparts of the second part of *Faust*. Clarendon, too—— But why should I continue this confession? Let the reader take up the wondrous tale himself, and run over the books that he has tried, and failed withal, and vowed to try again, and now beholds, as he goes about a library, with secret compunction. As to Sir Charles at least, I have the report of spies; and by the papers in the office of my Intelligence Department, it would seem he was a most accomplished baronet. I am the more ready to credit these reports, because the spies are persons thoroughly accustomed to the business; and because my own investigation of a kindred quarter of the globe (*Clarissa Harlowe*) has led me to set a high value on the Richardsonians. Lovelace—in spite of his abominable misbehaviour—Colonel Morden and my Lord M—— are all gentlemen of undisputed quality. They more than pass muster, they excel; they have a gallant, a conspicuous carriage; they roll into the book, four in hand, in gracious attitudes. The best of Fielding's gentlemen had scarce been at their ease in M—— Hall; Dr. Harrison had seemed a plain, honest man, a trifle below his company; and poor Booth (supposing him to have served in Colonel Morden's corps and to have travelled in the post-chaise along with his commandant) had been glad to slink away with Mowbray and crack a bottle in the butler's room.

So that here, on the terms of our theory, we have an odd inversion, tempting to the cynic.

II

Just the other day, there were again two rival novelists in England: Thackeray and Dickens; and the case of the last is, in this connection, full of interest. Here was a man and an artist, the most strenuous, one of the

most endowed; and for how many years he laboured in vain to create a gentleman! With all his watchfulness of men and manners, with all his fiery industry, with his exquisite native gift of characterisation, with his clear knowledge of what he meant to do, there was yet something lacking. In part after part, novel after novel, a whole menagerie of characters, the good, the bad, the droll, and the tragic, came at his beck like slaves about an Oriental despot; there was only one who stayed away: the gentleman. If this ill fortune had persisted it might have shaken man's belief in art and industry. But years were given and courage was continued to the indefatigable artist; and at length, after so many and such lamentable failures, success began to attend upon his arms. David Copperfield scrambled through on hands and knees; it was at least a negative success; and Dickens, keenly alive to all he did, must have heaved a sigh of infinite relief. Then came the evil days, the days of *Dombey* and *Dorrit*, from which the lover of Dickens willingly averts his eyes; and when that temporary blight had passed away, and the artist began with a more resolute arm to reap the aftermath of his genius, we find him able to create a Carton, a Wrayburn, a Twemlow. No mistake about these three; they are all gentlemen: the sottish Carton, the effete Twemlow, the insolent Wrayburn, all have doubled the cape.

There were never in any book three perfect sentences on end; there was never a character in any volume but it somewhere tripped. We are like dancing dogs and preaching women: the wonder is not that we should do it well, but that we should do it at all. And Wrayburn, I am free to admit, comes on one occasion to the dust. I mean, of course, the scene with the old Jew. I will make you a present of the Jew for a card-board figure; but that is neither here nor there: the ineffectuality of the one presentment does not mitigate the grossness, the baseness, the inhumanity of the other. In this scene, and in one other (if I remember aright) where it is

echoed, Wrayburn combines the wit of the omnibus-cad with the good feeling of the Andaman Islander: in all the remainder of the book, throughout a thousand perils, playing (you would say) with difficulty, the author swimmingly steers his hero on the true course. The error stands by itself, and it is striking to observe the moment of its introduction. It follows immediately upon one of the most dramatic passages in fiction, that in which Bradley Headstone barks his knuckles on the churchyard wall. To handle Bradley (one of Dickens's superlative achievements) were a thing impossible to almost any man but his creator; and even to him, we may be sure, the effort was exhausting. Dickens was a weary man when he had barked the schoolmaster's knuckles, a weary man and an excited; but the tale of bricks had to be finished, the monthly number waited; and under the false inspiration of irritated nerves, the scene of Wrayburn and the Jew was written and sent forth; and there it is, a blot upon the book and a buffet to the reader.

I make no more account of his passage than of that other in *Hamlet:* a scene that has broken down, the judicious reader cancels for himself. And the general tenor of Wrayburn, and the whole of Carton and Twemlow, are beyond exception. Here, then, we have a man who found it for years an enterprise beyond his art to draw a gentleman, and who in the end succeeded. Is it because Dickens was not a gentleman himself that he so often failed? and if so, then how did he succeed at last? Is it because he was a gentleman that he succeeded? and if so, what made him fail? I feel inclined to stop this paper here, after the manner of conundrums, and offer a moderate reward for a solution. But the true answer lies probably deeper than did ever plummet sound. And mine (such as it is) will hardly appear to the reader to disturb the surface.

These verbal puppets (so to call them once again) are things of a divided parentage: the breath of life may be an emanation from their maker, but they them-

selves are only strings of words and parts of books; they dwell in, they belong to, literature; convention, technical artifice, technical gusto, the mechanical necessities of the art, these are the flesh and blood with which they are invested. If we look only at Carton and Wrayburn, both leading parts, it must strike us at once that both are most ambitiously attempted; that Dickens was not content to draw a hero and a gentleman plainly and quietly; that after all his ill-success, he must still handicap himself upon these fresh adventures, and make Carton a sot, and sometimes a cantankerous sot, and Wrayburn insolent to the verge, and sometimes beyond the verge, of what is pardonable. A moment's thought will show us this was in the nature of his genius, and a part of his literary method. His fierce intensity of design was not to be slaked with any academic portraiture; not all the arts of individualisation could perfectly content him; he must still seek something more definite and more express than nature. All artists, it may be properly argued, do the like; it is their method to discard the middling and the insignificant, to disengage the charactered and the precise. But it is only a class of artists that pursue so singly the note of personality; and is it not possible that such a preoccupation may disable men from representing gentlefolk? The gentleman passes in the stream of the day's manners, inconspicuous. The lover of the individual may find him scarce worth drawing. And even if he draw him, on what will his attention centre but just upon those points in which his model exceeds or falls short of his subdued ideal—but just upon those points in which the gentleman is not genteel? Dickens, in an hour of irritated nerves, and under the pressure of the monthly number, defaced his Wrayburn. Observe what he sacrifices. The ruling passion strong in his hour of weakness, he sacrifices dignity, decency, the essential human beauties of his hero; he still preserves the dialect, the shrill note of personality, the mark of identification. Thackeray, under the strain of the same vil-

lainous system, would have fallen upon the other side; his gentleman would still have been a gentleman, he would have only ceased to be an individual figure.

There are incompatible ambitions. You cannot paint a Vandyke and keep it a Franz Hals.

III.

I have preferred to conclude my inconclusive argument before I touched on Thackeray. Personally, he carce appeals to us as the ideal gentleman; if there vere nothing else, perpetual nosing after snobbery at :east suggests the snob; but about the men he made, here can be no such question of reserve. And whether because he was himself a gentleman in a very high degree, or because his methods were in a very high degree suited to this class of work, or from the common operation of both causes, a gentleman came from his pen by the gift of nature. He could draw him as a character part, full of pettiness, tainted with vulgarity, and yet still a gentleman, in the inimitable Major Pendennis. He could draw him as the full-blown hero in Colonel Esmond. He could draw him—the next thing to the work of God—human and true and noble and frail, in Colonel Newcome. If the art of being a gentleman were forgotten, like the art of staining glass, it might be learned anew from that one character. It is learned there, I dare to say, daily. Mr. Andrew Lang, in a graceful attitude of melancholy, denies the influence of books. I think he forgets his philosophy; for surely there go two elements to the determination of conduct: heredity, and experience—that which is given to us at birth, that which is added and canceled in the course of life; and what experience is more formative, what step of life is more efficient, than to know and weep for Colonel Newcome? And surely he forgets himself; for I call to mind other pages, beautiful pages, from which it may be gathered that the language of *The Newcomes* sings still in his memory, and its gospel is sometimes

not forgotten. I call it a gospel: it is the best I know. Error and suffering and failure and death, those calamities that our contemporaries paint upon so vast a scale —they are all depicted here, but in a more true proportion. We may return, before this picture, to the simple and ancient faith. We may be sure (although we know not why) that we give our lives, like coral insects, to build up insensibly, in the twilight of the seas of time, the reef of righteousness. And we may be sure (although we see not how) it is a thing worth doing.

ESSAYS ON NATURE

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VI. *Pall Mall Gazette,* February, 1881
VII. *Pall Mall Gazette,* February, 1881
VIII. *Pall Mall Gazette,* March, 1881
IX. *Portfolio,* November, 1874
X. *Portfolio,* November, 1873

ESSAYS ON NATURE

I.

COCKERMOUTH AND KESWICK.

(A FRAGMENT: 1871)

VERY much as a painter half closes his eyes so that some salient unity may disengage itself from among the crowd of details, and what he sees may thus form itself into a whole; very much on the same principle, I may say, I allow a considerable lapse of time to intervene between any of my little journeyings and the attempt to chronicle them. I cannot describe a thing that is before me at the moment, or that has been before me only a very little while before; I must allow my recollections to get thoroughly strained free from all chaff till nothing be except the pure gold; allow my memory to choose out what is truly memorable by a process of natural selection; and I piously believe that in this way I ensure the Survival of the Fittest. If I make notes for future use, or if I am obliged to write letters during the course of my little excursion, I so interfere with the process that I can never again find out what is worthy of being preserved, or what should be given in full length, what in torso, or what merely in profile. This process of incubation may be unreasonably prolonged; and I am somewhat afraid that I have made this mistake with the present journey. Like a bad daguerreotype, great part of it has been entirely lost; I can tell you nothing about the beginning and nothing about the end; but the doings of some fifty or sixty hours about the middle remain quite distinct and definite, like a little patch of sunshine on a long,

shadowy plain, or the one spot on an old picture that has been restored by the dexterous hand of the cleaner. I remember a tale of an old Scots minister, called upon suddenly to preach, who had hastily snatched an old sermon out of his study and found himself in the pulpit before he noticed that the rats had been making free with his manuscript and eaten the first two or three pages away; he gravely explained to the congregation how he found himself situated; "And now," said he, "let us just begin where the rats have left off." I must follow the divine's example, and take up the thread of my discourse where it first distinctly issues from the limbo of forgetfulness.

COCKERMOUTH

I was lighting my pipe as I stepped out of the inn at Cockermouth, and did not raise my head until I was fairly in the street. When I did so, it flashed upon me that I was in England; the evening sunlight lit up English houses, English faces, an English conformation of street—as it were, an English atmosphere blew against my face. There is nothing perhaps more puzzling (if one thing in sociology can ever really be more unaccountable than another) than the great gulf that is set between England and Scotland—a gulf so easy in appearance, in reality so difficult to traverse. Here are two people almost identical in blood; pent up together on one small island, so that their intercourse (one would have thought) must be as close as that of prisoners who shared one cell of the Bastille; the same in language and religion; and yet a few years of quarrelsome isolation—a mere forenoon's tiff, as one may call it, in comparison with the great historical cycles—have so separated their thoughts and ways that not unions, not mutual dangers, nor steamers, nor railways, nor all the king's horses and all the king's men, seem able to obliterate the broad distinction. In the trituration of another century or so the corners may disappear; but

in the meantime, in the year of grace 1871, I was as much in a new country as if I had been walking out of the Hotel St. Antoine at Antwerp.

I felt a little thrill of pleasure at my heart as I realised the change, and strolled away up the street with my hands behind my back, noting in a dull, sensual way how foreign, and yet how friendly, were the slopes of the gables and the colour of the tiles, and even the demeanour and voices of the gossips round about me.

Wandering in this aimless humour, I turned up a lane and found myself following the course of the bright little river. I passed first one and then another, then a third, several couples out love-making in the spring evening; and a consequent feeling of loneliness was beginning to grow upon me, when I came to a dam across the river, and a mill—a great gaunt promontory of building—half on dry ground and half arched over the stream. The road here drew in its shoulders, and crept through between the landward extremity of the mill and a little garden enclosure, with a small house and a large sign-board within its privet hedge. I was pleased to fancy this an inn, and drew little etchings in fancy of a sanded parlour, and three-cornered spittoons, and a society of parochial gossips seated within over their church-wardens; but as I drew near, the board displayed its superscription, and I could read the name of Smethurst, and the designation of "Canadian Felt Hat Manufacturers." There was no more hope of evening fellowship and I could only stroll on by the river-side, under the trees. The water was dappled with slanting sunshine, and dusted all over with a little mist of flying insects. There were some amorous ducks, also, whose love-making reminded me of what I had seen a little farther down. But the road grew sad, and I grew weary; and as I was perpetually haunted with the terror of a return of the tic that had been playing such ruin in my head a week ago, I turned and went back to the inn, and supper, and my bed.

The next morning, at breakfast, I communicated to

the smart waitress my intention of continuing down the coast and through Whitehaven to Furness, and as I might have expected, I was instantly confronted by that last and most worrying form of interference, that chooses to introduce tradition and authority into the choice of a man's own pleasures. I can excuse a person combating my religious or philosophical heresies, because them I have deliberately accepted, and am ready to justify by present argument. But I do not seek to justify my pleasures. If I prefer tame scenery to grand, a little hot sunshine over lowland parks and woodlands to the war of the elements round the summit of Mont Blanc; or if I prefer a pipe of mild tobacco, and the company of one or two chosen companions, to a ball where I feel myself very hot, awkward, and weary, I merely state these preferances as facts, and do not seek to establish them as principles. This is not the general rule, however, and accordingly the waitress was shocked, as one might be at a heresy, to hear the route that I had sketched out for myself. Everybody who came to Cockermouth for pleasure, it appeared, went on to Keswick. It was in vain that I put up a little plea for the liberty of the subject; it was in vain that I said I should prefer to go to Whitehaven. I was told that there was "nothing to see there"—that weary, hackneyed, old falsehood; and at last, as the handmaiden began to look really concerned, I gave way, as men always do in such circumstances, and agreed that I was to leave for Keswick by a train in the early evening.

AN EVANGELIST

Cockermouth itself, on the same authority, was a place with "nothing to see"; nevertheless I saw a good deal, and retain a pleasant, vague picture of the town and all its surroundings. I might have dodged happily enough all day about the main street and up to the castle and in and out of by-ways, but the curious at-

traction that leads a person in a strange place to follow, day after day, the same round, and to make set habits for himself in a week or ten days, led me half unconsciously up the same road that I had gone the evening before. When I came up to the hat manufactory, Smethurst himself was standing in the garden gate. He was brushing one Canadian felt hat, and several others had been put to await their turn one above the other on his own head, so that he looked something like the typical Jew old-clothesman. As I drew near, he came sidling out of the doorway to accost me, with so curious an expression on his face that I instinctively prepared myself to apologise for some unwitting trespass. His first question rather confirmed me in this belief, for it was whether or not he had seen me going up this way last night; and after having answered in the affirmative, I waited in some alarm for the rest of my indictment. But the good man's heart was full of peace; and he stood there brushing his hats and prattling on about fishing, and walking, and the pleasures of convalescence, in a bright shallow stream that kept me pleased and interested, I could scarcely say how. As he went on, he warmed to his subject, and laid his hats aside to go along the water-side and show me where the large trout commonly lay, underneath an overhanging bank; and he was much disappointed, for my sake, that there were none visible just then. Then he wandered off on to another tack, and stood a great while out in the middle of a meadow in the hot sunshine, trying to make out that he had known me before, or, if not me, some friend of mine, merely, I believe, out of a desire that we should feel more friendly and at our ease with one another. At last he made a little speech to me, of which I wish I could recollect the very words, for they were so simple and unaffected that they put all the best writing and speaking to the blush; as it is, I can recall only the sense, and that perhaps imperfectly. He began by saying that he had little things in his past life that it gave him especial pleasure to recall; and that the faculty of

receiving such sharp impressions had now died out in himself, but must at my age be still quite lively and active. Then he told me that he had a little raft afloat on the river above the dam which he was going to lend me, in order that I might be able to look back, in after years, upon having done so, and get great pleasure from the recollection. Now, I have a friend of my own who will forgo present enjoyments and suffer much present inconvenience for the sake of manufacturing "a reminiscence" for himself; but there was something singularly refined in this pleasure that the hatmaker found in making reminiscences for others; surely no more simple or unselfish luxury can be imagined. After he had unmoored his little embarkation, and seen me safely shoved off into mid-stream, he ran away back to his hats with the air of a man who had only just recollected that he had anything to do.

I did not stay very long on the raft. It ought to have been very nice punting about there in the cool shade of the trees, or sitting moored to an overhanging root; but perhaps the very notion that I was bound in gratitude specially to enjoy my little cruise, and cherish its recollection, turned the whole thing from a pleasure into a duty. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that I soon wearied and came ashore again, and that it gives me more pleasure to recall the man himself and his simple, happy conversation, so full of gusto and sympathy, than anything possibly connected with his crank, insecure embarkation. In order to avoid seeing him, for I was not a little ashamed of myself for having failed to enjoy his treat sufficiently, I determined to continue up the river, and, at all prices, to find some other way back into the town in time for dinner. As I went, I was thinking of Smethurst with admiration; a look into that man's mind was like a retrospect over the smiling champaign of his past life, and very different from the Sinai-gorges up which one looks for a terrified moment into the dark souls of many good, many wise, and many prudent men. I cannot be very

grateful to such men for their excellence, and wisdom, and prudence. I find myself facing as stoutly as I can a hard, combative existence, full of doubt, difficulties, defeats, disappointments, and dangers, quite a hard enough life without their dark countenances at my elbow, as that what I want is a happy-minded Smethurst placed here and there at ugly corners of my life's wayside, preaching his gospel of quiet and contentment.

ANOTHER

I was shortly to meet with an evangelist of another stamp. After I had forced my way through a gentleman's grounds, I came out on the highroad, and sat down to rest myself on a heap of stones at the top of a long hill, with Cockermouth lying snugly at the bottom. An Irish beggarwoman, with a beautiful little girl by her side, came up to ask for alms, and gradually fell to telling me the little tragedy of her life. Her own sister, she told me, had seduced her husband from her after many years of married life, and the pair had fled, leaving her destitute, with the little girl upon her hands. She seemed quite hopeful and cheery and, though she was unaffectedly sorry for the loss of her husband's earnings, she made no pretence of despair at the loss of his affection; some day she would meet the fugitives, and the law would see her duly righted, and in the meantime the smallest contribution was gratefully received. While she was telling all this in the most matter-of-fact way, I had been noticing the approach of a tall man, with a high white hat and darkish clothes. He came up the hill at a rapid pace, and joined our little group with a sort of half-salutation. Turning at once to the woman, he asked her in a business-like way whether she had anything to do, whether she were a Catholic or a Protestant, whether she could read, and so forth; and then, after a few kind words and some sweeties to the child, he despatched the mother with some tracts about Biddy and the Priest, and the Or-

angeman's Bible. I was a little amused at this abrupt manner, for he was still a young man, and had somewhat the air of a navy officer; but he tackled me with great solemnity. I could make fun of what he said, for I do not think it was very wise; but the subject does not appear to me just now in a jesting light, so I shall only say that he related to me his own conversion, which had been effected (as is very often the case) through the agency of a gig accident, and that, after having examined me and diagnosed my case, he selected some suitable tracts from his repertory, gave them to me, bidding me God-speed, went on his way.

LAST OF SMETHURST

That evening I got into a third-class carriage on my way for Keswick, and was followed almost immediately by a burly man in brown clothes. This fellow-passenger was seemingly ill at ease, and kept continually putting his head out of the window, and asking the bystanders if they saw *him* coming. At last, when the train was already in motion, there was a commotion on the platform, and a way was left clear to our carriage door. *He* had arrived. In the hurry I could just see Smethurst, red and panting, thrust a couple of clap pipes into my companion's outstretched hand, and hear him crying his farewells after us as we slipped out of the station at an ever-accelerating pace. I said something about its being a close run, and the broad man, already engaged in filling one of the pipes, assented, and went on to tell me of his own stupidity in forgetting a necessary, and of how his friend had good-naturedly gone downtown at the last moment to supply the omission. I mentioned that I had seen Mr. Smethurst already, and that he had been very polite to me; and we fell into a discussion of the hatter's merits that lasted some time and left us quite good friends at its conclusion. The topic was productive of goodwill. We exchanged tobacco and talked about the season, and agreed

at last that we should go to the same hotel at Keswick and sup in company. As he had some business in the town which would occupy him some hour or so, on our arrival I was to improve the time and go down to the lake, that I might see a glimpse of the promised wonders.

The night had fallen already when I reached the water-side, at a place where many pleasure-boats are moored and ready for hire; and as I went along a stony path, between wood and water, a strong wind blew in gusts from the far end of the lake. The sky was covered with flying scud; and, as this was ragged, there was quite a wild chase of shadow and moon-glimpse over the surface of the shuddering water. I had to hold my hat on, and was growing rather tired, and inclined to go back in disgust, when a little incident occurred to break the tedium. A sudden and violent squall of wind sundered the low underwood, and at the same time there came one of those brief discharges of moonlight, which leaped into the opening thus made, and showed me three girls in the prettiest flutter and disorder. It was as though they had sprung out of the ground. I accosted them very politely in my capacity of stranger, and requested to be told the names of all manner of hills and woods and places that I did not wish to know, and we stood together for a while and had an amusing little talk. The wind, too, made himself of the party, brought the colour into their faces, and gave them enough to do to repress their drapery; and one of them, amid much giggling, had to pirouette round and round upon her toes (as girls do) when some specially strong gust had got the advantage over her. They were just high enough up in the social order not to be afraid to speak to a gentleman; and just low enough to feel a little tremor, a nervous consciousness of wrong-doing—of stolen waters, that gave a considerable zest to our most innocent interview. They were as much discomposed and fluttered, indeed, as if I had been a wicked baron proposing to elope with the whole trio; but they

showed no inclination to go away, and I had managed to get them off hills and waterfalls and on to more promising subjects, when a young man was descried coming along the path from the direction of Keswick. Now whether he was the young man of one of my friends, or the brother of one of them, or indeed the brother of all, I do not know; but they incontinently said that they must be going, and went away up the path with friendly salutations. I need not say that I found the lake and the moonlight rather dull after their departure, and speedily found my way back to potted herrings and whisky-and-water in the commercial room with my late fellow-traveller. In the smoking-room there was a tall dark man with a moustache, in an ulster coat, who had got the best place and was monopolising most of the talk; and, as I came in, a whisper came round to me from both sides, that this was the manager of a London theatre. The presence of such a man was a great event for Keswick, and I must own that the manager showed himself equal to his position. He had a large fat pocket-book, from which he produced poem after poem, written on the backs of letters or hotel-bills; and nothing could be more humorous than his recitation of these elegant extracts, except perhaps the anecdotes with which he varied the entertainment. Seeing, I suppose, something less countrified in my appearance than in most of the company, he singled me out to corroborate some statements as to the depravity and vice of the aristocracy, and when he went on to describe some gilded saloon experience, I am proud to say that he honoured my sagacity with one little covert wink before a second time appealing to me for confirmation. The wink was not thrown away; I went in up to the elbows with the manager, until I think that some of the glory of that great man settled by reflection upon me, and that I was as noticeably the second person in the smoking-room as he was the first. For a young man, this was a position of some distinction, I think you will admit. . . .

II.

AN AUTUMN EFFECT.

(1875)

"Nous ne décrivons jamais mieux la nature que lorsque nous nous efforçons d'exprimer sobrement et simplement l'impression que nous en avons reçue."—M. André Theuriet, "L'Automne dans les bois," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1*st Oct.*, 1874, *p.* 562.[1]

A COUNTRY rapidly passed through under favourable auspices may leave upon us a unity of impression that would only be disturbed and dissipated if we stayed longer. Clear vision goes with the quick foot. Things fall for us in a sort of natural perspective when we see them for a moment in going by; we generalise boldly and simply, and are gone before the sun is overcast, before the rain falls, before the season can steal like a dial-hand from his figure, before the lights and shadows, shifting round towards nightfall, can show us the other side of things, and belie what they showed us in the morning. We expose our mind to the landscape (as we would expose the prepared plate in the camera) for the moment only during which the effect endures; and we are away before the effect can change. Hence we shall have in our memories a long scroll of continu-

[1] I had nearly finished the transcription of the following pages, when I saw on a friend's table the number containing the piece from which this sentence is extracted, and, struck with a similarity of title, took it home with me and read it with indescribable satisfaction. I do not know whether I more envy M. Theuriet the pleasure of having written this delightful article, or the reader the pleasure, which I hope he has still before him, of reading it once and again, and lingering over the passages that please him most.

ous wayside pictures, all imbued already with the prevailing sentiment of the season, the weather, and the landscape, and certain to be unified more and more, as time goes on, by the unconscious processes of thought. So that we who have only looked at a country over our shoulder, so to speak, as we went by, will have a conception of it far more memorable and articulate than a man who has lived there all his life from a child upwards, and had his impression of to-day modified by that of to-morrow, and belied by that of the day after, till at length the stable characteristics of the country are all blotted out from him behind the confusion of variable effect.

I began my little pilgrimage in the most enviable of all humours: that in which a person, with a sufficiency of money and a knapsack, turns his back on a town and walks forward into a country of which he knows only by the vague report of others. Such an one has not surrendered his will and contracted for the next hundred miles, like a man on a railway. He may change his mind at every finger-post, and, where ways meet, follow vague preferences freely and go the low road or the high, choose the shadow or the sunshine, suffer himself to be tempted by the lane that turns immediately into the woods, or the broad road that lies open before him into the distance, and shows him the far-off spires of some city, or a range of mountain-tops, or a rim of sea, perhaps, along a low horizon. In short, he may gratify his every whim and fancy, without a pang of reproving conscience, or the least jostle to his self-respect. It is true, however, that most men do not possess the faculty of free action, the priceless gift of being able to live for the moment only; and as they begin to go forward on their journey, they will find that they have made for themselves new fetters. Slight projects they may have entertained for a moment, half in jest, become iron laws to them, they know not why. They will be led by the nose by these vague reports of which I spoke above; and the mere fact that their

informant mentioned one village and not another will compel their footsteps with inexplicable power. And yet a little while, yet a few days of this fictitious liberty, and they will begin to hear imperious voices calling on them to return; and some passion, some duty, some worthy or unworthy expectation, will set its hand upon their shoulder and lead them back into the old paths. Once and again we have all made the experiment. We know the end of it right well. And yet if we make it for the hundredth time to-morrow, it will have the same charm as ever; our heart will beat and our eyes will be bright, as we leave the town behind us, and we shall feel once again (as we have felt so often before) that we are cutting ourselves loose for ever from our whole past life, with all its sins and follies and circumscriptions, and go forward as a new creature into a new world.

It was well, perhaps, that I had this first enthusiasm to encourage me up the long hill above High Wycombe; for the day was a bad day for walking at best, and now began to draw towards afternoon, dull, heavy, and lifeless. A pall of grey cloud covered the sky, and its colour reacted on the colour of the landscape. Near at hand, indeed, the hedgerow trees were still fairly green, shot through with bright autumnal yellows, bright as sunshine. But a little way off, the solid bricks of woodland that lay squarely on slope and hill-top were not green, but russet and grey, and ever less russet and more grey as they drew off into the distance. As they drew off into the distance, also, the woods seemed to mass themselves together, and lie thin and straight, like clouds, upon the limit of one's view. Not that this massing was complete, or gave the idea of any extent of forest, for every here and there the trees would break up and go down into a valley in open order, or stand in long Indian file along the horizon, tree after tree relieved, foolishly enough, against the sky. I say foolishly enough, although I have seen the effect employed cleverly in art, and such long line of single trees thrown

out against the customary sunset of a Japanese picture with a certain fantastic effect that was not to be despised; but this was over water and level land, where it did not jar, as here, with the soft contour of hills and valleys. The whole scene had an indefinable look of being painted, the colour was so abstract and correct, and there was something so sketchy and merely impressional about these distant single trees on the horizon that one was forced to think of it all as of a clever French landscape. For it is rather in nature that we see resemblance to art, than in art to nature; and we say a hundred times, "How like a picture!" for once that we say, "How like the truth!" The forms in which we learn to think of landscape are forms that we have got from painted canvas. Any man can see and understand a picture; it is reserved for the few to separate anything out of the confusion of nature, and see that distinctly and with intelligence.

The sun came out before I had been long on my way; and as I had got by that time to the top of the ascent, and was now treading a labyrinth of confined by-roads, my whole view brightened considerably in colour, for it was the distance only that was grey and cold, and the distance I could see no longer. Overhead there was a wonderful carolling of larks which seemed to follow me as I went. Indeed, during all the time I was in that country the larks did not desert me. The air was alive with them from High Wycombe to Tring; and as, day after day, their "shrill delight" fell upon me out of the vacant sky, they began to take such a prominence over other conditions, and form so integral a part of my conception of the country, that I could have baptised it "The Country of Larks." This, of course, might just as well have been in early spring; but everything else was deeply imbued with the sentiment of the later year. There was no stir of insects in the grass. The sunshine was more golden, and gave less heat than summer sunshine; and the shadows under

the hedge were somewhat blue and misty. It was only in autumn that you could have seen the mingled green and yellow of the elm foliage, and the fallen leaves that lay about the road, and covered the surface of wayside pools so thickly that the sun was reflected only here and there from little joints and pinholes in that brown coat of proof; or that your ear would have been troubled, as you went forward, by the occasional report of fowling-pieces from all directions and all degrees of distance.

For a long time this dropping fire was the one sign of human activity that came to disturb me as I walked. The lanes were profoundly still. They would have been sad but for the sunshine and the singing of the larks. And as it was, there came over me at times a feeling of isolation that was not disagreeable, and yet was enough to make me quicken my steps eagerly when I saw some one before me on the road. This fellow-voyager proved to be no less a person than the parish constable. It had occurred to me that in a district which was so little populous and so well wooded, a criminal of any intelligence might play hide-and-seek with the authorities for months; and this idea was strengthened by the aspect of the portly constable as he walked by my side with deliberate dignity and turned-out toes. But a few minutes' converse set my heart at rest. These rural criminals are very tame birds, it appeared. If my informant did not immediately lay his hands on an offender, he was content to wait; some evening after night-fall there would come a tap at his door, and the outlaw, weary of outlawry, would give himself quietly up to undergo sentence, and resume his position in the life of the countryside. Married men caused him no disquietude whatever; he had them fast by the foot. Sooner or later they would come back to see their wives, a peeping neighbour would pass the word, and my portly constable would walk quietly over and take the bird sitting. And if there were a few who had no particular ties in the neighbourhood, and preferred to shift into

another county when they fell into trouble, their departure moved the placid constable in no degree. He was of Dogberry's opinion; and if a man would not stand in the Prince's name, he took no note of him, but let him go, and thanked God he was rid of a knave. And surely the crime and the law were in admirable keeping; rustic constable was well met with rustic offender. The officer sitting at home over a bit of fire until the criminal came to visit him, and the criminal coming—it was a fair match. One felt as if this must have been the order in that delightful seaboard Bohemia where Florizel and Perdita courted in such sweet accents, and the Puritan sang psalms to hornpipes, and the four-and-twenty shearers danced with nosegays in their bosoms, and chanted their three songs apiece at the old shepherd's festival; and one could not help picturing to oneself what havoc among good people's purses, and tribulation for benignant constables, might be worked here by the arrival, over stile and footpath, of a new Autolycus.

Bidding good-morning to my fellow-traveller, I left the road and struck across country. It was rather a revelation to pass from between the hedgerows and find quite a bustle on the other side, a great coming and going of school-children upon by-paths, and, in every second field, lusty horses and stout country-folk a-ploughing. The way I followed took me through many fields thus occupied, and through many strips of plantation, and then over a little space of smooth turf, very pleasant to the feet, set with tall fir-trees and clamorous with rooks making ready for the winter, and so back again into the quiet road. I was now not far from the end of my day's journey. A few hundred yards farther, and, passing through a gap in the hedge, I began to go down hill through a pretty extensive tract of young beeches. I was soon in shadow myself, but the afternoon sun still coloured the upmost boughs of the wood, and made a fire over my head in the autumnal foliage. A little faint vapour lay among the

slim tree-stems in the bottom of the hollow; and from farther up I heard from time to time an outburst of gross laughter, as though clowns were making merry in the bush. There was something about the atmosphere that brought all sights and sounds home to one with a singular purity, so that I felt as if my senses had been washed with water. After I had crossed the little zone of mist, the path began to remount the hill; and just as I, mounting along with it, had got back again, from the head downwards, into the thin golden sunshine, I saw in front of me a donkey tied to a tree. Now, I have a certain liking for donkeys, principally, I believe, because of the delightful things that Sterne has written of them. But this was not after the pattern of the ass at Lyons. He was of a white colour, that seemed to fit him rather for rare festal occasions than for constant drudgery. Besides, he was very small, and of the daintiest proportions you can imagine in a donkey. And so, sure enough, you had only to look at him to see he had never worked. There was something too roguish and wanton in his face, a look too like that of a schoolboy or a street Arab, to have survived much cudgelling. It was plain that these feet had kicked off sportive children oftener than they had plodded with a freight through miry lanes. He was altogether a fine-weather, holiday sort of donkey; and though he was just then somewhat solemnised and rueful, he still gave proof of the levity of his disposition by impudently wagging his ears at me as I drew near. I say he was somewhat solemnised just then; for, with the admirable instinct of all men and animals under restraint, he had so wound and wound the halter about the tree that he could go neither back nor forwards, nor so much as put down his head to browse. There he stood, poor rogue, part puzzled, part angry, part, I believe, amused. He had not given up hope, and dully revolved the problem in his head, giving ever and again another jerk at the few inches of free rope that still remained unwound. A humorous sort of sympathy for the creature took hold

upon me. I went up, and, not without some trouble on my part, and much distrust and resistance on the part of Neddy, got him forced backwards until the whole length of the halter was set loose, and he was once more as free a donkey as I dared to make him. I was pleased (as people are) with this friendly action to a fellow-creature in tribulation, and glanced back over my shoulder to see how he was profiting by his freedom. The brute was looking after me; and no sooner did he catch my eye than he put up his long white face into the air, pulled an impudent mouth at me, and began to bray derisively. If ever any one person made a grimace at another, that donkey made a grimace at me. The hardened ingratitude of his behaviour, and the impertinence that inspired his whole face as he curled up his lip, and showed his teeth, and began to bray, so tickled me, and was so much in keeping with what I had imagined to myself about his character, that I could not find it in my heart to be angry, and burst into a peal of hearty laughter. This seemed to strike the ass as a repartee, so he brayed at me again by way of rejoinder; and we went on for a while, braying and laughing, until I began to grow a-weary of it, and, shouting a derisive farewell, turned to pursue my way. In so doing—it was like going suddenly into cold water —I found myself face to face with a prim little old maid. She was all in a flutter, the poor old dear! She had concluded beyond question that this must be a lunatic who stood laughing aloud at a white donkey in the placid beech-woods. I was sure, by her face, that she had already recommended her spirit most religiously to Heaven, and prepared herself for the worst. And so, to reassure her, I uncovered and besought her, after a very staid fashion, to put me on my way to Great Missenden. Her voice trembled a little, to be sure, but I think her mind was set at rest; and she told me, very explicitly, to follow the path until I came to the end of the wood, and then I should see the village below me in the bottom of the valley. And, with mutual

courtesies, the little old maid and I went on our respective ways.

Nor had she misled me. Great Missenden was close at hand, as she had said, in the trough of a gentle valley, with many great elms about it. The smoke from its chimneys went up pleasantly in the afternoon sunshine. The sleepy hum of a threshing-machine filled the neighbouring fields and hung about the quaint street corners. A little above, the church sits well back on its haunches against the hill-side—an attitude for a church, you know, that makes it look as if it could be ever so much higher if it liked; and the trees grew about it thickly, so as to make a density of shade in the churchyard. A very quiet place it looks; and yet I saw many boards and posters about threatening dire punishment against those who broke the church windows or defaced the precinct, and offering rewards for the apprehension of those who had done the like already. It was fair-day in Great Missenden. There were three stalls set up, *sub Jove*, for the sale of pastry and cheap toys; and a great number of holiday children thronged about the stalls, and noisily invaded every corner of the straggling village. They came round me by coveys, blowing simultaneously upon penny trumpets as though they imagined I should fall to pieces like the battlements of Jericho. I noticed one among them who could make a wheel of himself like a London boy, and seemingly enjoyed a grave pre-eminence upon the strength of the accomplishment. By and by, however, the trumpets began to weary me, and I went indoors, leaving the fair, I fancy, at its height.

Night had fallen before I ventured forth again. It was pitch-dark in the village street, and the darkness seemed only the greater for a light here and there in an uncurtained window or from an open door. Into one such window I was rude enough to peep, and saw within a charming *genre* picture. In a room, all white wainscot and crimson wall-paper, a perfect gem of colour after the black, empty darkness in which I had been groping,

a pretty girl was telling a story, as well as I could make out, to an attentive child upon her knee, while an old woman sat placidly dozing over the fire. You may be sure I was not behind-hand with a story for myself—a good old story after the manner of G. P. R. James and the village melodramas, with a wicked squire, and poachers, and an attorney, and a virtuous young man with a genius for mechanics, who should love, and protect, and ulimately marry the girl in the crimson room. Baudelaire has a few dainty sentences on the fancies that we are inspired with when we look through a window into other people's lives; and I think Dickens has somewhere enlarged on the same text. The subject, at least, is one that I am seldom weary of entertaining. I remember, night after night, at Brussels, watching a good family sup together, make merry, and retire to rest; and night after night I waited to see the candles lit, and the salad made, and the last salutations dutifully exchanged, without any abatement of interest. Night after night I found the scene rivet my attention and keep me awake in bed with all manner of quaint imaginations. Much of the pleasure of the *Arabian Nights* hinges upon this Asmodean interest; and we are not weary of lifting other people's roofs, and going about behind the scenes of life with the Caliph and the serviceable Giaffar. It is a salutory exercise, besides; it is salutory to get out of ourselves and see people living together in perfect unconsciousness of our existence, as they will live when we are gone. If to-morrow the blow falls, and the worst of our ill fears is realised, the girl will none the less tell stories to the child on her lap in the cottage at Great Missenden, nor the good Belgians light their candle, and mix their salad, and go orderly to bed.

The next morning was sunny overhead and damp underfoot, with a thrill in the air like a reminiscence of frost. I went up into the sloping garden behind the inn and smoked a pipe pleasantly enough, to the tune of my landlady's lamentations over sundry cabbages

and cauliflowers that had been spoiled by caterpillars. She had been so much pleased in the summer-time, she said, to see the garden all hovered over by white butterflies. And now, look at the end of it! She could nowise reconcile this with her moral sense. And, indeed, unless these butterflies are created with a side-look to the composition of improving apologues, it is not altogether easy, even for people who have read Hegel and Dr. M'Cosh, to decide intelligently upon the issue raised. Then I fell into a long and abstruse calculation with my landlord; having for object to compare the distance driven by him during eight years' service on the box of the Wendover coach with the girth of the round world itself. We tackled the question most conscientiously, made all necessary allowance for Sundays and leap-years, and were just coming to a triumphant conclusion of our labours when we were stayed by a small lacuna in my information. I do not know the circumference of the earth. The landlord knew it, to be sure—plainly he had made the same calculation twice and once before—but he wanted confidence in his own figures, and from the moment I showed myself so poor a second seemed to lose all interest in the result.

Wendover (which was my next stage) lies in the same valley with Great Missenden, but at the foot of it, where the hills trend off on either hand like a coast-line, and a great hemisphere of plain lies, like a sea, before one. I went up a chalky road, until I had a good outlook over the place. The vale, as it opened out into the plain, was shallow, and a little bare, perhaps, but full of graceful convolutions. From the level to which I had now attained the fields were exposed before me like a map, and I could see all that bustle of autumn field-work, which had been hid from me yesterday behind the hedgerows, or shown to me only for a moment as I followed the footpath. Wendover lay well down in the midst, with mountains of foliage about it. The great plain stretched away to the northward, variegated near at hand with the quaint pattern of the

fields, but growing ever more and more indistinct, until it became a mere hurly-burly of trees and bright crescents of river, and snatches of slanting road, and finally melted into the ambiguous cloud-land over the horizon. The sky was an opal-grey, touched here and there with blue, and with certain faint russets that looked as if they were reflections of the colour of the autumnal woods below. I could hear the ploughmen shouting to their horses, the uninterrupted carol of larks innumerable overhead, and, from a field where the shepherd was marshalling his flock, a sweet tumultuous tinkle of sheep-bells. All these noises came to me very thin and distinct in the clear air. There was a wonderful sentiment of distance and atmosphere about the day and the place.

I mounted the hill yet farther by a rough staircase of chalky footholds cut in the turf. The hills about Wendover and, as far as I could see, all the hills in Buckinghamshire, wear a sort of hood of beech plantation; but in this particular case the hood had been suffered to extend itself into something more like a cloak, and hung down about the shoulders of the hill in wide folds, instead of lying flatly along the summit. The trees grew so close, and their boughs were so matted together, that the whole wood looked as dense as a bush of heather. The prevailing colour was a dull, smouldering red, touched here and there with vivid yellow. But the autumn had scarce advanced beyond the outworks; it was still almost summer in the heart of the wood; and as soon as I had scrambled through the hedge, I found myself in a dim green forest atmosphere under eaves of virgin foliage. In places where the wood had itself for a background and the trees were massed together thickly, the colour became intensified and almost gem-like; a perfect fire of green, that seemed none the less green for a few specks of autumn gold. None of the trees were of any considerable age or stature; but they grew well together, I have said; and as the road turned and wound among

them, they fell into pleasant groupings and broke the light up pleasantly. Sometimes there would be a colonnade of slim, straight tree-stems with the light running down them as down the shaft of pillars, that looked as if it ought to lead to something, and led only to a corner of sombre and intricate jungle. Sometimes a spray of delicate foliage would be thrown out flat, the light lying flatly along the top of it, so that against a dark background it seemed almost luminous. There was a great hush over the thicket (for, indeed, it was more of a thicket than a wood); and the vague rumours that went among the tree-tops, and the occasional rustling of big birds or hares among the undergrowth, had in them a note of almost treacherous stealthiness, that put the imagination on its guard and made me walk warily on the russet carpeting of last year's leaves. The spirit of the place seemed to be all attention; the wood listened as I went, and held its breath to number my footfalls. One could not help feeling that there ought to be some reason for this stillness: whether, as the bright old legend goes, Pan lay somewhere near in siesta, or whether, perhaps, the heaven was meditating rain, and the first drop would soon come pattering through the leaves. It was not unpleasant, in such an humour, to catch sight, ever and anon, of large spaces of the open plain. This happened only where the path lay much upon the slope, and there was a flaw in the solid leafy thatch of the wood at some distance below the level at which I chanced myself to be walking; then, indeed, little scraps of fore-shortened distance, miniature fields and Lilliputian houses and hedgerow trees would appear for a moment in the aperture, and grow larger and smaller, and change and melt one into another, as I continued to go forward, and so shift my point of view.

For ten minutes, perhaps, I had heard from somewhere before me in the wood a strange, continuous noise, as of clucking, cooing, and gobbling, now and again interrupted by a harsh scream. As I advanced towards this noise, it began to grow lighter about me, and I

caught sight, through the trees, of sundry gables and enclosure walls, and something like the tops of a rick-yard. And sure enough, a rickyard it proved to be, and a neat little farmsteading, with the beech-woods growing almost to the door of it. Just before me, however, as I came up the path, the trees drew back and let in a wide flood of daylight on to a circular lawn. It was here that the noises had their origin. More than a score of peacocks (there are altogether thirty at the farm), a proper contingent of peahens, and a great multitude that I could not number of more ordinary barn-door fowls, were all feeding together on this little open lawn among the beeches. They fed in a dense crowd, which swayed to and fro, and came hither and thither as by a sort of tide, and of which the surface was agitated like the surface of a sea as each bird guzzled his head along the ground after the scattered corn. The clucking, cooing noise that had led me thither was formed by the blending together of countless expressions of individual contentment into one collective expression of contentment, or general grace during meat. Every now and again a big peacock would separate himself from the mob and take a stately turn or two about the lawn, or perhaps mount for a moment upon the rail, and there shrilly publish to the world his satisfaction with himself and what he had to eat. It happened, for my sins, that none of these admirable birds had anything beyond the merest rudiment of a tail. Tails, it seemed, were out of season just then. But they had their necks for all that; and by their necks alone they do as much surpass all the other birds of our grey climate as they fall in quality of song below the blackbird or the lark. Surely the peacock, with its incomparable parade of glorious colour and the scrannel voice of it issuing forth, as in mockery, from its painted throat, must, like my landlady's butterflies at Great Missenden, have been invented by some skilful fabulist for the consolation and support of homely virtue: or rather, perhaps, by a fabulist not quite so skilful, who made points for the

moment without having a studious enough eye to the complete effect; for I thought these melting greens and blues so beautiful that afternoon, that I would have given them my vote just then before the sweetest pipe in all the spring woods. For indeed there is no piece of colour of the same extent in nature, that will so flatter and satisfy the lust of a man's eyes; and to come upon so many of them, after these acres of stone-coloured heavens and russet woods, and grey-brown ploughlands and white roads, was like going three whole days' journey to the southward, or a month back into the summer.

I was sorry to leave *Peacock Farm*—for so the place is called, after the name of its splendid pensioners—and go forwards again in the quiet woods. It began to grow both damp and dusk under the beeches; and as the day declined the colour faded out of the foliage; and shadow, without form and void, took the place of all the fine tracery of leaves and delicate gradations of living green that had before accompanied my walk. I had been sorry to leave *Peacock Farm,* but I was not sorry to find myself once more in the open road, under a pale and somewhat troubled-looking evening sky, and put my best foot foremost for the inn at Wendover.

Wendover, in itself, is a straggling, purposeless sort of place. Everybody seems to have had his own opinion as to how the street should go; or rather, every now and then a man seems to have arisen with a new idea on the subject, and led away a little sect of neighbours to join in his heresy. It would have somewhat the look of an abortive watering-place, such as we may now see them here and there along the coast, but for the age of the houses, the comely quiet design of some of them, and the look of long habitation, of a life that is settled and rooted, and makes it worth while to train flowers about the windows, and otherwise shape the dwelling to the humour of the inhabitant. The church, which might perhaps have served as rallying-point for these loose houses, and pulled the township into some-

thing like intelligible unity, stands some distance off among great trees; but the inn (to take the public buildings in order of importance) is in what I understand to be the principal street: a pleasant old house, with bay-windows, and three peaked gables, and many swallows' nests plastered about the eaves.

The interior of the inn was answerable to the outside; indeed, I never saw any room much more to be admired than the low wainscoted parlour in which I spent the remainder of the evening. It was a short oblong in shape, save that the fireplace was built across one of the angles so as to cut it partially off, and the opposite angle was similarly truncated by a corner cupboard. The wainscot was white, and there was a Turkey carpet on the floor, so old that it might have been imported by Walter Shandy before he retired, worn almost through in some places, but in others making a good show of blues and oranges, none the less harmonious for being somewhat faded. The corner cupboard was agreeable in design; and there were just the right things upon the shelves—decanters and tumblers, and blue plates, and one red rose in a glass of water. The furniture was old-fashioned and stiff. Everything was in keeping, down to the ponderous leaden inkstand on the round table. And you may fancy how pleasant it looked, all flushed and flickered over by the light of a brisk companionable fire, and seen, in a strange, tilted sort of perspective, in the three compartments of the old mirror above the chimney. As I sat reading in the great armchair, I kept looking round with the tail of my eye at the quaint, bright picture that was about me, and could not help some pleasure and a certain childish pride in forming part of it. The book I read was about Italy in the early Renaissance, the pageantries and the light loves of princes, the passion of men for learning, and poetry, and art; but it was written, by good luck, after a solid, prosaic fashion, that suited the room infinitely more nearly than the matter; and the result was that I thought less, perhaps,

of Lippo Lippi, or Lorenzo, or Politian, than of the good Englishman who had written in that volume what he knew of them, and taken so much pleasure in his solemn polysyllables.

I was not left without society. My landlord had a very pretty little daughter, whom we shall call Lizzie. If I had made any notes at the time, I might be able to tell you something definite of her appearance. But faces have a trick of growing more and more spiritualised and abstract in the memory, until nothing remains of them but a look, a haunting expression; just that secret quality in a face that is apt to slip out somehow under the cunningest painter's touch, and leave the portrait dead for the lack of it. And if it is hard to catch with the finest of camel's-hair pencils, you may think how hopeless it must be to pursue after it with clumsy words. If I say, for instance, that this look, which I remember as Lizzie, was something wistful that seemed partly to come of slyness and in part of simplicity, and that I am inclined to imagine it had something to do with the daintiest suspicion of a cast in one of her large eyes, I shall have said all that I can, and the reader will not be much advanced towards comprehension. I had struck up an acquaintance with this little damsel in the morning, and professed much interest in her dolls, and an impatient desire to see the large one which was kept locked away for great occasions. And so I had not been very long in the parlour before the door opened, and in came Miss Lizzie with two dolls tucked clumsily under her arm. She was followed by her brother John, a year or so younger than herself, not simply to play propriety at our interview, but to show his own two whips in emulation of his sister's dolls. I did my best to make myself agreeable to my visitors, showing much admiration for the dolls and dolls' dresses, and, with a very serious demeanour, asking many questions about their age and character. I do not think that Lizzie distrusted my sincerity, but it was evident that she was both bewildered and a little

contemptuous. Although she was ready herself to treat her dolls as if they were alive, she seemed to think rather poorly of any grown person who could fall heartily into the spirit of the fiction. Sometimes she would look at me with gravity and a sort of disquietude, as though she really feared I must be out of my wits. Sometimes, as when I inquired too particularly into the question of their names, she laughed at me so long and heartily that I began to feel almost embarrassed. But when, in an evil moment, I asked to be allowed to kiss one of them, she could keep herself no longer to herself. Clambering down from the chair on which she sat perched to show me, Cornelia-like, her jewels, she ran straight out of the room and into the bar—it was just across the passage—and I could hear her telling her mother in loud tones, but apparently more in sorrow than in merriment, that *the gentleman in the parlour wanted to kiss Dolly.* I fancy she was determined to save me from this humiliating action, even in spite of myself, for she never gave me the desired permission. She reminded me of an old dog I once knew, who would never suffer the master of the house to dance, out of an exaggerated sense of the dignity of that master's place and carriage.

After the young people were gone there was but one more incident ere I went to bed. I heard a party of children go up and down the dark street for a while, singing together sweetly. And the mystery of this little incident was so pleasant to me that I purposely refrained from asking who they were, and wherefore they went singing at so late an hour. One can rarely be in a pleasant place without meeting with some pleasant accident. I have a conviction that these children would not have gone singing before the inn unless the inn-parlour had been the delightful place it was. At least, if I had been in the customary public room of the modern hotel, with all its disproportions and discomforts, my ears would have been dull, and there would have been some ugly temper or other up-

permost in my spirit, and so they would have wasted their songs upon an unworthy hearer.

Next morning I went along to visit the church. It is a long-backed red-and-white building, very much restored, and stands in a pleasant graveyard among those great trees of which I have spoken already. The sky was drowned in a mist. Now and again pulses of cold wind went about the enclosure, and set the branches busy overhead, and the dead leaves scurrying into the angles of the church buttresses. Now and again, also, I could hear the dull sudden fall of a chestnut among the grass—the dog would bark before the rectory door—or there would come a clinking of pails from the stable-yard behind. But in spite of these occasional interruptions—in spite, also, of the continuous autumn twittering that filled the trees—the chief impression somehow was one as of utter silence, insomuch that the little greenish bell that peeped out of a window in the tower disquieted me with a sense of some possible and more inharmonious disturbance. The grass was wet, as if with a hoar-frost that had just been melted. I do not know that ever I saw a morning more autumnal. As I went to and fro among the graves, I saw some flowers set reverently before a recently erected tomb, and drawing near was almost startled to find they lay on the grave of a man seventy-two years old when he died. We are accustomed to strew flowers only over the young, where love has been cut short untimely, and great possibilities have been restrained by death. We strew them there in token that these possibilities, in some deeper sense, shall yet be realised, and the touch of our dead loves remain with us and guide us to the end. And yet there was more significance, perhaps, and perhaps a greater consolation, in this little nosegay on the grave of one who had died old. We are apt to make so much of the tragedy of death, and think so little of the enduring tragedy of some men's lives, that we see more to lament for in a life cut off in the midst of usefulness and love, than in one that miserably

survives all love and usefulness, and goes about the world the phantom of itself, without hope, or joy, or any consolation. These flowers seemed not so much the token of love that survived death, as of something yet more beautiful—of love that had lived a man's life out to an end with him, and been faithful and companionable, and not weary of loving, throughout all these years.

The morning cleared a little, and the sky was once more the old stone-coloured vault over the sallow meadows and the russet woods, as I set forth on a dog-cart from Wendover to Tring. The road lay for a good distance along the side of the hills, with the great plain below on one hand, and the beech-woods above on the other. The fields were busy with people ploughing and sowing; every here and there a jug of ale stood in the angle of the hedge, and I could see many a team wait smoking in the furrow as ploughman or sower stepped aside for a moment to take a draught. Over all the brown ploughlands, and under all the leafless hedgerows, there was a stout piece of labour abroad, and, as it were, a spirit of picnic. The horses smoked and the men laboured and shouted and drank in the sharp autumn morning; so that one had a strong effect of large, open-air existence. The fellow who drove me was something of a humourist; and his conversation was all in praise of an agricultural labourer's way of life. It was he who called my attention to these jugs of ale by the hedgerow; he could not sufficiently express the liberality of these men's wages; he told me how sharp an appetite was given by breaking up the earth in the morning air, whether with plough or spade, and cordially admired this provision of nature. He sang *O fortunatos agricolas!* indeed, in every possible key, and with many cunning inflections, till I began to wonder what was the use of such people as Mr. Arch, and to sing the same air myself in a more diffident manner.

Tring was reached, and then Tring railway-station; for the two are not very near, the good people of Tring

having held the railway, of old days, in extreme apprehension, lest some day it should break loose in the town and work mischief. I had a last walk, among russet beeches as usual, and the air filled, as usual, with the carolling of larks; I heard shots fired in the distance, and saw, as a new sign of the fulfilled autumn, two horsemen exercising a pack of foxhounds. And then the train came and carried me back to London.

III.

A WINTER'S WALK IN CARRICK AND GALLOWAY.

(A FRAGMENT: 1876)

AT the famous bridge of Doon, Kyle, the central district of the shire of Ayr, marches with Carrick, the most southerly. On the Carrick side of the river rises a hill of somewhat gentle conformation, cleft with shallow dells, and sown here and there with farms and tufts of wood. Inland, it loses itself, joining, I suppose, the great herd of similar hills that occupies the centre of the Lowlands. Towards the sea, it swells out the coastline into a protuberance, like a bay-window in a plan, and is fortified against the surf behind bold crags. This hill is known as the Brown Hill of Carrick, or, more shortly, Brown Carrick.

It had snowed overnight. The fields were all sheeted up; they were tucked in among the snow, and their shape was modelled through the pliant counterpane, like children tucked in by a fond mother. The wind had made ripples and folds upon the surface, like what the sea, in quiet weather, leaves upon the sand. There was a frosty stifle in the air. An effusion of coppery light on the summit of Brown Carrick showed where the sun was trying to look through; but along the horizon clouds of cold fog had settled down, so that there was no distinction of sky and sea. Over the white shoulders of the headlands, or in the opening of bays, there was nothing but a great vacancy and blackness; and the road as it drew near the edge of the cliff seemed to skirt the shores of creation and void space.

The snow crunched underfoot, and at farms all the dogs broke out barking as they smelt a passer-by upon the road. I met a fine old fellow, who might have sat as the father in "The Cotter's Saturday Night," and who swore most heathenishly at a cow he was driving. And a little after I scraped acquaintance with a poor body tramping out to gather cockles. His face was wrinkled by exposure; it was broken up into flakes and channels, like mud beginning to dry, and weathered in two colours, an incongruous pink and grey. He had a faint air of being surprised—which, God knows, he might well be—that life had gone so ill with him. The shape of his trousers was in itself a jest, so strangely were they bagged and ravelled about his knees; and his coat was all bedaubed with clay as though he had lain in a rain-dub during the New Year's festivity. I will own I was not sorry to think he had had a merry New Year, and been young again for an evening; but I was sorry to see the mark still there. One could not expect such an old gentleman to be much of a dandy, or a great student of respectability in dress; but there might have been a wife at home, who had brushed out similar stains after fifty New Years, now become old, or a round-armed daughter, who would wish to have him neat, were it only out of self-respect and for the ploughman sweetheart when he looks round at night. Plainly there was nothing of this in his life, and years and loneliness hung heavily on his old arms. He was seventy-six, he told me; and nobody would give a day's work to a man that age: they would think he couldn't do it. "And, 'deed," he went on, with a sad little chuckle, "'deed, I doubt if I could." He said good-bye to me at a footpath, and crippled wearily off to his work. It will make your heart ache if you think of his old fingers groping in the snow.

He told me I was to turn down beside the schoolhouse for Dunure. And so, when I found a lone house among the snow, and heard a babble of childish voices from within, I struck off into a steep road leading

downwards to the sea. Dunure lies close under the steep hill: a haven among the rocks, a breakwater in consummate disrepair, much apparatus for drying nets, and a score or so of fishers' houses. Hard by, a few shards of ruined castle overhang the sea, a few vaults, and one tall gable honey-combed with windows. The snow lay on the beach to the tide-mark. It was daubed on to the sills of the ruin; it roosted in the crannies of the rock like white sea-birds; even on outlying reefs there would be a little cock of snow, like a toy lighthouse. Everything was grey and white in a cold and dolorous sort of shepherd's plaid. In the profound silence, broken only by the noise of oars at sea, a horn was sounded twice; and I saw the postman, girt with two bags, pause a moment at the end of the clachan for letters. It is, perhaps, characteristic of Dunure that none were brought to him.

The people at the public-house did not seem well pleased to see me, and though I would have stayed by the kitchen fire, sent me "ben the hoose" into the guest-room. This guest-room at Dunure was painted in quite æsthetic fashion. There are rooms in the same taste not a hundred miles from London, where persons of an extreme sensibility meet together without embarrassment. It was all in a fine dull bottle-green and black; a grave harmonious piece of colouring, with nothing, so far as coarser folk can judge, to hurt the better feelings of the most exquisite purist. A cherry-red half window-blind kept up an imaginary warmth in the cold room, and threw quite a glow on the floor. Twelve cockle-shells and a halfpenny china figure were ranged solemnly along the mantel-shelf. Even the spittoon was an original note, and instead of sawdust contained sea-shells. And as for the hearth-rug, it would merit an article to itself, and a coloured diagram to help the text. It was patchwork, but the patchwork of the poor: no glowing shreds of old brocade and Chinese silk, shaken together in the kaleidoscope of some tasteful housewife's fancy; but a work of art in its own way,

and plainly a labour of love. The patches came exclusively from people's raiment. There was no colour more brilliant than a heather mixture; "My Johnnie's grey breeks," well polished over the oar on the boat's thwart, entered largely into its composition. And the spoils of an old black cloth coat, that had been many a Sunday to church, added something (save the mark!) of preciousness to the material.

While I was at luncheon four carters came in—long-limbed, muscular Ayrshire Scots, with lean, intelligent faces. Four quarts of stout were ordered; they kept filling the tumbler with the other hand as they drank; and in less time than it takes me to write these words the four quarts were finished—another round was proposed, discussed, and negatived—and they were creaking out of the village with their carts.

The ruins drew you towards them. You never saw any place more desolate from a distance, nor one that less belied its promise near at hand. Some crows and gulls flew away croaking as I scrambled in. The snow had drifted into the vaults. The clachan dabbled with snow, the white hills, the black sky, the sea marked in the coves with faint circular wrinkles, the whole world, as it looked from a loophole in Dunure, was cold, wretched, and out-at-elbows. If you had been a wicked baron and compelled to stay there all the afternoon, you would have had a rare fit of remorse. How you would have heaped up the fire and gnawed your fingers! I think it would have come to homicide before the evening—if it were only for the pleasure of seeing something red! And the masters of Dunure, it is to be noticed, were remarkable of old for inhumanity. One of these vaults where the snow had drifted was that "black voute" where "Mr. Alane Stewart, Commendatour of Crossraguel," endured his fiery trials. On the 1st and 7th of September, 1570 (ill dates for Mr. Alan!), Gilbert, Earl of Cassilis, his chaplain, his baker, his cook, his pantryman, and another servant, bound the poor Commendator "betwix an iron chimlay and a fire,"

and there cruelly roasted him until he signed away his abbacy. It is one of the ugliest stories of an ugly period, but not, somehow, without such a flavour of the ridiculous as makes it hard to sympathise quite seriously with the victim. And it is consoling to remember that he got away at last, and kept his abbacy, and, over and above, had a pension from the Earl until he died.

Some way beyond Dunure a wide bay, of somewhat less unkindly aspect, opened out. Colzean plantations lay all along the steep shore, and there was a wooded hill towards the centre, where the trees made a sort of shadowy etching over the snow. The road went down and up, and past a blacksmith's cottage that made fine music in the valley. Three compatriots of Burns drove up to me in a cart. They were all drunk, and asked me jeeringly if this was the way to Dunure. I told them it was; and my answer was received with unfeigned merriment. One gentleman was so much tickled he nearly fell out of the cart; indeed, he was only saved by a companion, who either had not so fine a sense of humour or had drunken less.

"The toune of Mayboll," says the inimitable Abercrummie,[1] "stands upon an ascending ground from east to west, and lyes open to the south. It hath one principall street, with houses upon both sides, built of freestone; and it is beautifyed with the situation of two castles, one at each end of this street. That on the east belongs to the Erle of Cassilis. On the west end is a castle, which belonged sometime to the laird of Blairquan, which is now the tolbuith, and is adorned with a pyremide [conical roof], and a row of ballesters round it raised from the top of the staircase, into which they have mounted a fyne clock. There be four lanes which pass from the principall street; one is called the Black Vennel, which is steep, declining to the southwest, and leads to a lower street, which is far larger than the high chiefe street, and it runs from the Kirk-

[1] William Abercrombie. See *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*, under "Maybole" (Part iii.).

land to the Well Trees, in which there have been many pretty buildings, belonging to the severall gentry of the countrey, who were wont to resort thither in winter, and divert themselves in converse together at their owne houses. It was once the principall street of the town; but many of these houses of the gentry having been decayed and ruined, it has lost much of its ancient beautie. Just opposite to this vennel, there is another that leads north-west, from the chiefe street to the green, which is a pleasant plott of ground, enclosed round with an earthen wall, wherein they were wont to play football, but now at the Gowff and byasse-bowls. The houses of this toune, on both sides of the street, have their several gardens belonging to them; and in the lower street there be some pretty orchards, that yield store of good fruit." As Patterson says, this description is near enough even to-day, and is mighty nicely written to boot. I am bound to add, of my own experience, that Maybole is tumbledown and dreary. Prosperous enough in reality, it has an air of decay, and though the population has increased, a roofless house every here and there seems to protest the contrary. The women are more than well-favoured, and the men fine tall fellows; but they look slipshod and dissipated. As they slouched at street corners, or stood about gossiping in the snow, it seemed they would have been more at home in the slums of a large city than here in a country place betwixt a village and a town. I heard a great deal about drinking, and a great deal about religious revivals: two things in which the Scottish character is emphatic and most unlovely. In particular, I heard of clergymen who were employing their time in explaining to a delighted audience the physics of the Second Coming. It is not very likely any of us will be asked to help. If we were, it is likely we should receive instructions for the occasion, and that on more reliable authority. And so I can only figure to myself a congregation truly curious in such flights of theological fancy, as one of veteran and accomplished saints,

who have fought the good fight to an end and outlived all worldly passion, and are to be regarded rather as a part of the Church Triumphant than the poor, imperfect company on earth. And yet I saw some young fellows about the smoking-room who seemed, in the eyes of one who cannot count himself strait-laced, in need of some more practical sort of teaching. They seemed only eager to get drunk, and to do so speedily. It was not much more than a week after the New Year; and to hear them return on their past bouts with a gusto unspeakable was not altogether pleasing. Here is one snatch of talk, for the accuracy of which I can vouch—

"Ye had a spree here last Tuesday?"

"We had that!"

"I wasna able to be oot o' my bed. Man, I was awful bad on Wednesday."

"Ay, ye were gey bad."

And you should have seen the bright eyes, and heard the sensual accents! They recalled their doings with devout gusto and a sort of rational pride. Schoolboys, after their first drunkenness, are not more boastful; a cock does not plume himself with a more unmingled satisfaction as he paces forth among his harem; and yet these were grown men, and by no means short of wit. It was hard to suppose they were very eager about the Second Coming: it seemed as if some elementary notions of temperance for the men and seemliness for the women would have gone nearer the mark. And yet, as it seemed to me typical of much that is evil in Scotland, Maybole is also typical of much that is best. Some of the factories, which have taken the place of weaving in the town's economy, were originally founded and are still possessed by self-made men of the sterling, stout old breed—fellows who made some little bit of an invention, borrowed some little pocketful of capital, and then, step by step, in courage, thrift, and industry, fought their way upwards to an assured position.

Abercrummie has told you enough of the Tolbooth; but, as a bit of spelling, this inscription on the Tolbooth

bell seems too delicious to withhold: "This bell is founded at Maiboll Bi Danel Geli, a Frenchman, the 6th November, 1696, Bi appointment of the heritors of the parish of Maiyboll." The Castle deserves more notice. It is a large and shapely tower, plain from the ground upwards, but with a zone of ornamentation running about the top. In a general way this adornment is perched on the very summit of the chimney-stacks; but there is one corner more elaborate than the rest. A very heavy string-course runs round the upper story, and just above this, facing up the street, the tower carries a small oriel window, fluted and corbelled and carved about with stone heads. It is so ornate it has somewhat the air of a shrine. And it was, indeed, the casket of a very precious jewel, for in the room to which it gives light lay, for long years, the heroine of the sweet old ballad of "Johnnie Faa"—she who, at the call of the gipsies' songs, "came tripping down the stair, and all her maids before her." Some people say the ballad has no basis in fact, and have written, I believe, unanswerable papers to the proof. But in the face of all that, the very look of that high oriel window convinces the imagination, and we enter into all the sorrows of the imprisoned dame. We conceive the burthen of the long, lack-lustre days, when she leaned her sick head against the mullions, and saw the burghers loafing in Maybole High Street, and the children at play, and ruffling gallants riding by from hunt or foray. We conceive the passion of odd moments, when the wind threw up to her some snatch of song, and her heart grew hot within her, and her eyes overflowed at the memory of the past. And even if the tale be not true of this or that lady, or this or that old tower, it is true in the essence of all men and women: for all of us, some time or other, hear the gipsies singing, over all of us is the glamour cast. Some resist and sit resolutely by the fire. Most go and are brought back again, like Lady Cassilis. A few, of the tribe of Waring, go and are seen no more; only now and again, at spring-time, when

the gipsies' song is afloat in the amethyst evening, we can catch their voices in the glee.

By night it was clearer, and Maybole more visible than during the day. Clouds coursed over the sky in great masses; the full moon battled the other way, and lit up the snow with gleams of flying silver; the town came down the hill in a cascade of brown gables, bestridden by smooth white roofs, and spangled here and there with lighted windows. At either end the snow stood high up in the darkness, on the peak of the Tolbooth and among the chimneys of the Castle. As the moon flashed a bull's-eye glitter across the town between the racing clouds, the white roofs leaped into relief over the gables and the chimney-stacks, and their shadows over the white roofs. In the town itself the lit face of the clock peered down the street; an hour was hammered out on Mr. Geli's bell, and from behind the red curtains of a public-house some one trolled out—a compatriot of Burns, again!—"The saut tear blin's my e'e."

Next morning there was sun and a flapping wind. From the street corners of Maybole I could catch breezy glimpses of green fields. The road underfoot was wet and heavy—part ice, part snow, part water; and any one I met greeted me, by way of salutation, with "A fine thowe" (thaw). My way lay among rather bleak hills, and past bleak ponds and dilapidated castles and monasteries, to the Highland-looking village of Kirkoswald. It has little claim to notice, save that Burns came there to study surveying in the summer of 1777, and there also, in the kirkyard, the original of "Tam o'Shanter" sleeps his last sleep. It is worth noticing, however, that this was the first place I thought "Highland-looking." Over the hill from Kirkoswald a farm-road leads to the coast. As I came down above Turnberry, the sea view was indeed strangely different from the day before. The cold fogs were all blown away; and there was Ailsa Craig, like a refraction, magnified and deformed, of the Bass

Rock; and there were the chiselled mountain-tops of Arran, veined and tipped with snow; and behind, and fainter, the low, blue land of Cantyre. Cottony clouds stood, in a great castle, over the top of Arran, and blew out in long streamers to the south. The sea was bitten all over with white; little ships, tacking up and down the Firth, lay over at different angles in the wind. On Shanter they were ploughing lea; a cart foal, all in a field by himself, capered and whinnied as if the spring were in him.

The road from Turnberry to Girvan lies along the shore, among sand-hills and by wildernesses of tumbled bent. Every here and there a few cottages stood together beside a bridge. They had one odd feature, not easy to describe in words: a triangular porch projected from above the door, supported at the apex by a single upright post; a secondary door was hinged to the post, and could be hasped on either cheek of the real entrance; so, whether the wind was north or south, the cotter could make himself a triangular bight of shelter where to set his chair and finish a pipe with comfort. There is one objection to this device: for, as the post stands in the middle of the fairway, anyone precipitately issuing from the cottage must run his chance of a broken head. So far as I am aware, it is peculiar to the little corner of country about Girvan. And that corner is noticeable for more reasons: it is certainly one of the most characteristic districts in Scotland. It has this movable porch by way of architecture; it has, as we shall see, a sort of remnant of provincial costume, and it has the handsomest population in the Lowlands.

IV.

FOREST NOTES.

(1875-6)

ON THE PLAIN

PERHAPS the reader knows already the aspect of the great levels of the Gâtinais, where they border with the wooded hills of Fontainebleau. Here and there a few grey rocks creep out of the forest as if to sun themselves. Here and there a few apple-trees stand together on a knoll The quaint, undignified tartan of a myriad small fields dies out into the distance; the strips blend and disappear; and the dead flat lies forth open and empty, with no accident save perhaps a thin line of trees or faint church spire against the sky. Solemn and vast at all times, in spite of pettiness in the near details, the impression becomes more solemn and vast towards evening. The sun goes down, a swollen orange, as it were into the sea. A blue-clad peasant rides home, with a harrow smoking behind him among the dry clods. Another still works with his wife in their little strip. An immense shadow fills the plain; these people stand in it up to their shoulders; and their heads, as they stoop over their work and rise again, are relieved from time to time against the golden sky.

These peasant farmers are well off nowadays, and not by any means overworked; but somehow you always see in them the historical representative of the serf of yore, and think not so much of present times, which may be prosperous enough, as of the old days when the peasant was taxed beyond possibility of payment, and

lived, in Michelet's image, like a hare between two furrows. These very people now weeding their patch under the broad sunset, that very man and his wife, it seems to us, have suffered all the wrongs of France. It is they who have been their country's scapegoat for long ages; they who, generation after generation, have sowed and not reaped, reaped and another has garnered; and who have now entered into their reward, and enjoy their good things in their turn. For the days are gone by when the Seigneur ruled and profited. "Le Seigneur," say the old formula, "enferme ses manants comme sous porte et gonds, du ciel à la terre. Tout est à lui, forêt chenue, oiseau dans l'air, poisson dans l'eau, bête au buisson, l'onde qui coule, la cloche dont le son au loin roule." Such was his old state of sovereignty, a local god rather than a mere king. And now you may ask yourself where he is, and look round for vestiges of my late lord, and in all the country-side there is no trace of him but his forlorn and fallen mansion. At the end of a long avenue, now sown with grain, in the midst of a close full of cypresses and lilacs, ducks and crowing chanticleers and droning bees, the old château lifts its red chimneys and peaked roofs and turning vanes into the wind and sun. There is a glad spring bustle in the air, perhaps, and the lilacs are all in flowers, and the creepers green about the broken balustrade; but no spring shall revive the honour of the place. Old women of the people, little children of the people, saunter and gambol in the walled court or feed the ducks in the neglected moat. Plough-horses, mighty of limb, browse in the long stables. The dial-hand on the clock waits for some better hour. Out on the plain, where hot sweat trickles into men's eyes, and the spade goes in deep and comes up slowly, perhaps the peasant may feel a movement of joy at his heart when he thinks that these spacious chimneys are now cold, which have so often blazed and flickered upon gay folk at supper, while he and his hollow-eyed children watched through the night with empty bellies and cold

feet. And perhaps as he raises his head and sees the forest lying like a coast-line of low hills along the sea-like level of the plain, perhaps forest and château hold no unsimilar place in his affections.

If the château was my lord's the forest was my lord the king's; neither of them for this poor Jacques. If he thought to eke out his meagre way of life by some petty theft of wood for the fire, or for a new roof-tree, he found himself face to face with a whole department, from the Grand Master of the Woods and Waters, who was a high-born lord, down to the common sergeant, who was a peasant like himself, and wore stripes or a bandoleer by way of uniform. For the first offence, by the Salic law, there was a fine of fifteen sols; and should a man be taken more than once in fault, or circumstances aggravate the colour of his guilt, he might be whipped, branded, or hanged. There was a hangman over at Melun, and, I doubt not, a fine tall gibbet hard by the town gate, where Jacques might see his fellows dangle against the sky as he went to market.

And then, if he lived near to a cover, there would be the more hares and rabbits to eat out his harvest, and the more hunters to trample it down. My lord has a new horn from England. He has laid out seven francs in decorating it with silver and gold, and fitting it with a silken leash to hang about his shoulder. The hounds have been on a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Mesmer, or Saint Hubert in the Ardennes, or some other holy intercessor who has made a specialty of the health of hunting-dogs. In the grey dawn the game was turned and the branch broken by our best piqueur. A rare day's hunting lies before us. Wind a jolly flourish, sound the bien-aller with all your lungs. Jacques must stand by, hat in hand, while the quarry and hound and huntsman sweep across his field; and a year's sparing and labouring is as though it had not been. If he can see the ruin with a good enough grace, who knows but he may fall in favour with my lord;

who knows but his son may become the last and least among the servants at his lordship's kennel—one of the two poor varlets who get no wages and sleep at night among the hounds.[1]

For all that, the forest has been of use to Jacques, not only warming him with fallen wood, but giving him shelter in days of sore trouble, when my lord of the château, with all his troopers and trumpets, had been beaten from field after field into some ultimate fastness, or lay overseas in an English prison. In these dark days, when the watch on the church steeple saw the smoke of burning villages on the sky-line, or a clump of spears and fluttering pennons drawing nigh across the plain, these good folk gat them up, with all their household gods, into the wood, whence, from some high spur, their timid scouts might overlook the coming and going of the marauders, and see the harvest ridden down, and church and cottage go up to heaven all night in flame. It was but an unhomely refuge that the woods afforded, where they might abide all change of weather and keep house with wolves and vipers. Often there was none left alive, when they returned, to show the old divisions of field from field. And yet, as times went, when the wolves entered at night into depopulated Paris, and perhaps De Retz was passing by with a company of demons like himself, even in these caves and thickets there were glad hearts and grateful prayers.

Once or twice, as I say, in the course of the ages, the forest may have served the peasant well, but at heart it is a royal forest, and noble by old association. These woods have rung to the horns of all the kings of France, from Philip Augustus downwards. They have seen Saint Louis exercise the dogs he brought with him from Egypt; Francis I. go a-hunting with ten thousand horses in his train; and Peter of Russia following his first

[1] "Deux poures varlez qui n'ont nulz gages et qui gissoient la nuit avec les chiens." See Champollion-Figeac's *Louis et Charles d'Orléans*, i. 63, and for my lord's English horn, *ibid.* 96.

stag. And so they are still haunted for the imagination by royal hunts and progresses, and peopled with the faces of memorable men of yore. And this distinction is not only in virtue of the pastime of dead monarchs. Great events, great revolutions, great cycles in the affairs of men, have here left their note, here taken shape in some significant and dramatic situation. It was hence that Guise and his leaguers led Charles the Ninth a prisoner to Paris. Here, booted and spurred, and with all his dogs about him, Napoleon met the Pope beside a woodland cross. Here, on his way to Elba not so long after, he kissed the eagle of the Old Guard, and spoke words of passionate farewell to his soldiers. And here, after Waterloo, rather than yield its ensign to the new power, one of his faithful regiments burned that memorial of so much toil and glory on the Grand Master's table, and drank its dust in brandy, as a devout priest consumes the remnants of the Host.

IN THE SEASON

Close into the edge of the forest, so close that the trees of the *bornage* stand pleasantly about the last houses, sits a certain small and very quiet village. There is but one street, and that, not long ago, was a green lane, where the cattle browsed between the doorsteps. As you go up this street, drawing ever nearer the beginning of the wood, you will arrive at last before an inn where artists lodge. To the door (for I imagine it to be six o'clock on some fine summer's even), half a dozen, or maybe half a score, of people have brought out chairs, and now sit sunning themselves, and waiting the omnibus from Melun. If you go on into the court you will find as many more, some in the billiard-room over absinthe and a match of corks, some without over a last cigar and a vermouth. The doves coo and flutter from the dovecote; Hortense is drawing water from the well; and as all the rooms open into the court, you can see the white-capped cook over the fur-

nace in the kitchen, and some idle painter, who has stored his canvases and washed his brushes, jangling a waltz on the crazy, tongue-tied piano in the salle-à-manger. "*Edmond, encore un vermouth,*" cries a man in velveteen, adding in a tone of apologetic afterthought, "*un double, s'il vous plaît.*" "Where are you working?" asks one in pure white linen from top to toe. "At the Carrefour de l'Épine," returns the other in corduroy (they are all gaitered, by the way). "I couldn't do a thing to it. I ran out of white. Where were you?" "I wasn't working, I was looking for motives." Here is an outbreak of jubilation, and a lot of men clustering together about some new-comer with outstretched hands; perhaps the "correspondence" has come in and brought So-and-so from Paris, or perhaps it is only So-and-so who has walked over from Chailly to dinner.

"*A table, Messieurs!*" cries M. Siron, bearing through the court the first tureen of soup. And immediately the company begins to settle down about the long tables in the dining-room, framed all round with sketches of all degrees of merit and demerit. There's the big picture of the huntsman winding a horn, with a dead boar between his legs, and his legs—well, his legs in stockings. And here is the little picture of a raw mutton-chop, in which Such-a-one knocked a hole last summer with no worse a missile than a plum from the dessert. And under all these works of art so much eating goes forward, so much drinking, so much jabbering in French and English, that it would do your heart good merely to peep and listen at the door. One man is telling how they all went last year to the fête at Fleury, and another how well So-and-so would sing of an evening; and here are a third and fourth making plans for the whole future of their lives; and there is a fifth imitating a conjurer and making faces on his clenched fist, surely of all arts the most difficult and admirable! A sixth has eaten his fill, lights a cigarette, and resigns himself to digestion. A seventh has just

dropped in, and calls for soup. Number eight, meanwhile, has left the table, and is once more trampling the poor piano under powerful and uncertain fingers.

Dinner over, people drop outside to smoke and chat. Perhaps we go along to visit our friends at the other end of the village, where there is always a good welcome and a good talk, and perhaps some pickled oysters and white wine to close the evening. Or a dance is organised in the dining-room, and the piano exhibits all its paces under manful jockeying, to the light of the three or four candles and a lamp or two, while the waltzers move to and fro upon the wooden floor, and sober men, who are not given to such light pleasures, get up on the table or the sideboard, and sit there looking on approvingly over a pipe and a tumbler of wine. Or sometimes—suppose my lady moon looks forth, and the court from out the half-lit dining-room seems nearly as bright as by day, and the light picks out the window-panes, and makes a clear shadow under every vine-leaf on the wall—sometimes a picnic is proposed, and a basket made ready, and a good procession formed in front of the hotel. The two trumpeters in honour go before; and as we file down the long alley, and up through devious footpaths among rocks and pine-trees, with every here and there a dark passage of shadow, and every here and there a spacious outlook over moonlit woods, these two precede us and sound many a jolly flourish as they walk. We gather ferns and dry boughs into the cavern, and soon a good blaze flutters the shadows of the old bandits' haunt, and shows shapely beards and comely faces and toilettes ranged about the wall. The bowl is lit, and the punch is burnt and sent round in scalding thimblefuls. So a good hour or two may pass with song and jest. And then we go home in the moonlight morning, straggling a good deal among the birch tufts and the boulders, but ever called together again, as one of our leaders winds his horn. Perhaps some one of the party will not heed the summons, but chooses out some by-way of his own. As

he follows the winding sandy road, he hears the flourishes grow fainter and fainter in the distance, and die finally out, and still walks on in the strange coolness and silence and between the crisp lights and shadows of the moonlit woods, until suddenly the bell rings out the hour from far-away Chailly, and he starts to find himself alone. No surf-bell on forlorn and perilous shores, no passing knoll over the busy market-place, can speak with a more heavy and disconsolate tongue to human ears. Each stroke calls up a host of ghostly reverberations in his mind. And as he stands rooted, it has grown once more so utterly silent that it seems to him he might hear the church bells ring the hour out all the world over, not at Chailly only, but in Paris, and away in outlandish cities, and in the village on the river, where his childhood passed between the sun and flowers.

IDLE HOURS

The woods by night, in all their uncanny effect, are not rightly to be understood until you can compare them with the woods by day. The stillness of the medium, the floor of glittering sand, these trees that go streaming up like monstrous sea-weeds and waver in the moving winds like the weeds in submarine currents, all these set the mind working on the thought of what you may have seen off a foreland or over the side of a boat, and make you feel like a diver, down in the quiet water, fathoms below the tumbling, transitory surface of the sea. And yet in itself, as I say, the strangeness of these nocturnal solitudes is not to be felt fully without the sense of contrast. You must have risen in the morning and seen the woods as they are by day, kindled and coloured in the sun's light; you must have felt the odour of innumerable trees at even, the unsparing heat along the forest roads, and the coolness of the groves.

And on the first morning you will doubtless rise betimes. If you have not been wakened before by the

visit of some adventurous pigeon, you will be awakened as soon as the sun can reach your window—for there are no blinds or shutters to keep him out—and the room, with its bare wood floor and bare whitewashed walls, shines all round you in a sort of glory of reflected lights. You may doze a little while longer by snatches, or lie awake to study the charcoal men and dogs and horses with which former occupants have defiled the partitions: Thiers, with wily profile; local celebrities, pipe in hand; or maybe, a romantic landscape splashed in oil. Meanwhile artist after artist drops into the salle-à-manger for coffee, and then shoulders easel, sunshade, stool, and paint-box, bound into a fagot, and sets off for what he calls his "motive." And artist after artist, as he goes out of the village, carries with him a little following of dogs. For the dogs, who belong only nominally to any special master, hang about the gate of the forest all day long, and whenever anyone goes by who hits their fancy, profit by his escort, and go forth with him to play an hour or two at hunting. They would like to be under the trees all day. But they cannot go alone. They require a pretext. And so they take the passing artist as an excuse to go into the woods, as they might take a walking-stick as an excuse to bathe. With quick ears, long spines, and bandy legs, or perhaps as tall as a greyhound and with a bulldog's head, this company of mongrels will trot by your side all day and come home with you at night, still showing white teeth and wagging stunted tail. Their good-humour is not to be exhausted. You may pelt them with stones if you please, and all they will do is to give you a wider berth. If once they come out with you, to you they will remain faithful, and with you return; although if you meet them next morning in the street, it is as like as not they will cut you with a countenance of brass.

The forest—a strange thing for an Englishman—is very destitute of birds. This is no country where every patch of wood among the meadows gives up an incense

of song, and every valley wandered through by streamlet rings and reverberates from side to side with a profusion of clear notes. And this rarity of birds is not to be regretted on its own account only. For the insects prosper in their absence, and become as one of the plagues of Egypt. Ants swarm in the hot sand; mosquitoes drone their nasal drone; wherever the sun finds a hole in the roof of the forest, you see a myriad transparent creatures coming and going in the shaft of light; and even between-whiles, even where there is no incursion of sun-rays into the dark arcade of the wood, you are conscious of a continual drift of insects, an ebb and flow of infinitesimal living things between the trees. Nor are insects the only evil creatures that haunt the forest. For you may plump into a cave among the rocks, and find yourself face to face with a wild boar, or see a crooked viper slither across the road.

Perhaps you may set yourself down in the bay between two spreading beech-roots with a book on your lap, and be awakened all of a sudden by a friend: "I say, just keep where you are, will you? You make the jolliest motive." And you reply: "Well, I don't mind, if I may smoke." And thereafter the hours go idly by. Your friend at the easel labours doggedly a little way off, in the wide shadow of the tree; and yet farther, across a strait of glaring sunshine, you see another painter, encamped in the shadow of another tree, and up to his waist in the fern. You cannot watch your own effigy growing out of the white trunk, and the trunk beginning to stand forth from the rest of the wood, and the whole picture getting dappled over with the flecks of sun that slip through the leaves overhead, and, as a wind goes by and sets the trees a-talking, flicker hither and thither like butterflies of light. But you know it is going forward; and, out of emulation with the painter, get ready your own palette, and lay out the colour for a woodland scene in words.

Your tree stands in a hollow paved with fern and heather, set in a basin of low hills, and scattered over

with rocks and junipers. All the open is steeped in pitiless sunlight. Everything stands out as though it were cut in cardboard, every colour is strained into its highest key. The boulders are some of them upright and dead like monolithic castles, some of them prone like sleeping cattle. The junipers—looking, in their soiled and ragged mourning, like some funeral procession that has gone seeking the place of sepulchre three hundred years, and more, in wind and rain—are daubed in forcibly against the glowing ferns and heather. Every tassel of their rusty foliage is defined with pre-Raphaelite minuteness. And a sorry figure they make out there in the sun, like misbegotten yew-trees! The scene is all pitched in a key of colour so peculiar, and lit up with such a discharge of violent sunlight, as a man might live fifty years in England and not see.

Meanwhile at your elbow some one tunes up a song, words of Ronsard to a pathetic tremulous air, of how the poet loved his mistress long ago, and pressed on her the flight of time, and told her how white and quiet the dead lay under the stones, and how the boat dipped and pitched as the shades embarked for the passionless land. Yet a little while, sang the poet, and there shall be no more love; only to sit and remember loves that might have been. There is a falling flourish in the air that remains in the memory and comes back in incongruous places, on the seat of hansoms or in the warm bed at night, with something of a forest savour.

"You can get up now," says the painter; "I'm at the background."

And so up you get, stretching yourself, and go your way into the wood, the daylight becoming richer and more golden, and the shadows stretching farther into the open. A cool air comes along the highways, and the scents awaken. The fir-trees breathe abroad their ozone. Out of unknown thickets comes forth the soft, secret, aromatic odour of the woods, not like a smell of the free heaven, but as though court ladies, who had known these paths in ages long gone by, still walked

in the summer evenings, and shed from their brocades a breath of musk or bergamot upon the woodland winds. One side of the long avenues is still kindled with the sun, the other is plunged in transparent shadow. Over the trees the west begins to burn like a furnace; and the painters gather up their chattels, and go down, by avenue or footpath, to the plain.

A PLEASURE PARTY

As this excursion is a matter of some length, and, moreover, we go in force, we have set aside our usual vehicle, the pony-cart, and ordered a large wagonette from Lejosne's. It has been waiting for near an hour, while one went to pack a knapsack, and t'other hurried over his toilette and coffee; but now it is filled from end to end with merry folk in summer attire, the coachman cracks his whip, and amid much applause from round the inn door off we rattle at a spanking trot. The way lies through the forest, up hill and down dale, and by beech and pine wood, in the cheerful morning sunshine. The English get down at all the ascents and walk on ahead for exercise; the French are mightily entertained at this, and keep coyly underneath the tilt. As we go we carry with us a pleasant noise of laughter and light speech, and some one will be always breaking out into a bar or two of opera bouffe. Before we get to the Route Ronde here comes Desprez, the colourman from Fontainebleau, trudging across on his weekly peddle with a case of merchandise; and it is " Desprez, leave me some malachite green "; " Desprez, leave me so much canvas "; " Desprez, leave me this, or leave me that "; M. Desprez standing the while in the sunlight with grave face and many salutations. The next interruption is more important. For some time back we have had the sound of cannon in our ears; and now, a little past Franchard, we find a mounted trooper holding a led horse, who brings the wagonette to a stand. The artillery is practising in the Quadrilateral, it ap-

pears; passage along the Route Ronde formally interdicted for the moment. There is nothing for it but to draw up at the glaring cross-roads, and get down to make fun of the notorious Cocardon, the most ungainly and ill-bred dog of all the ungainly and ill-bred dogs of Barbizon, or clamber about the sandy banks. And meanwhile the Doctor, with sun umbrella, wide Panama, and patriarchal beard, is busy wheedling and (for aught the rest of us know) bribing the too facile sentry. His speech is smooth and dulcet, his manner dignified and insinuating. It is not for nothing that the Doctor has voyaged all the world over, and speaks all languages from French to Patagonian. He has not come home from perilous journeys to be thwarted by a corporal of horse. And so we soon see the soldier's mouth relax, and his shoulders imitate a relenting heart. "*En voiture, Messieurs, Mesdames,*" sings the Doctor; and on we go again at a good round pace, for black care follows hard after us, and discretion prevails not a little over valour in some timorous spirits of the party. At any moment we may meet the sergeant, who will send us back. At any moment we may encounter a flying shell, which will send us somewhere farther off than Grez.

Grez—for that is our destination—has been highly recommended for its beauty. "*Il y a de l'eau,*" people have said, with an emphasis, as if that settled the question, which, for a French mind, I am rather led to think it does. And Grez, when we get there, is indeed a place worthy of some praise. It lies out of the forest, a cluster of houses, with an old bridge, an old castle in ruin, and a quaint old church. The inn garden descends in terraces to the river; stable-yard, kailyard, orchard, and a space of lawn, fringed with rushes and embellished with a green arbour. On the opposite bank there is a reach of English-looking plain, set thickly with willows and poplars. And between the two lies the river, clear and deep, and full of reeds and floating lilies. Water-plants cluster about the sterlings of the

long low bridge, and stand half-way up upon the piers in green luxuriance. They catch the dipped oar with long antennæ, and chequer the slimy bottom with the shadow of their leaves. And the river wanders hither and thither among the islets, and is smothered and broken up by the reeds, like an old building in the lithe, hardy arms of the climbing ivy. You may watch the box where the good man of the inn keeps fish alive for his kitchen, one oily ripple following another over the top of the yellow deal. And you can hear a splashing and a prattle of voices from the shed under the old kirk, where the village women wash and wash all day among the fish and water-lilies. It seems as if linen washed there should be specially cool and sweet.

We have come here for the river. And no sooner have we all bathed than we board the two shallops and push off gaily, and go gliding under the trees and gathering a great treasure of water-lilies. Some one sings; some trail their hands in the cool water; some lean over the gunwale to see the image of the tall poplars far below, and the shadow of the boat, with the balanced oars and their own head protruded, glide smoothly over the yellow floor of the stream. At last, the day declining—all silent and happy, and up to the knees in the wet lilies—we punt slowly back again to the landing-place beside the bridge. There is a wish for solitude on all. One hides himself in the arbour with a cigarette; another goes a walk in the country with Cocardon; a third inspects the church. And it is not till dinner is on the table, and the inn's best wine goes round from glass to glass, that we begin to throw off the restraint and fuse once more into a jolly fellowship.

Half the party are to return to-night with the wagonette, and some of the others, loath to break up good company, will go with them a bit of the way and drink a stirrup-cup at Marlotte. It is dark in the wagonette, and not so merry as it might have been. The coachman loses the road. So-and-so tries to light fireworks with the most indifferent success. Some sing, but the

rest are too weary to applaud; and it seems as if the festival were fairly at an end—

> "Nous avons fait la noce,
> Rentrons à nos foyers!"

And such is the burthen, even after we have come to Marlotte and taken our places in the court at Mother Antonine's. There is punch on the long table out in the open air, where the guests dine in summer weather. The candles flare in the night wind, and the faces round the punch are lit up, with shifting emphasis, against a background of complete and solid darkness. It is all picturesque enough; but the fact is, we are a-weary. We yawn; we are out of the vein; we have made the wedding, as the song says, and now, for pleasure's sake, let's make an end on't. When here comes striding into the court, booted to mid-thigh, spurred and splashed, in a jacket of green cord, the great, famous, and redoubtable Blank; and in a moment the fire kindles again, and the night is witness of our laughter as he imitates Spaniards, Germans, Englishmen, picture-dealers, all eccentric ways of speaking and thinking, with a possession, a fury, a strain of mind and voice, that would rather suggest a nervous crisis than a desire to please. We are as merry as ever when the trap sets forth again, and say farewell noisily to all the good folk going farther. Then, as we are far enough from thoughts of sleep, we visit Blank in his quaint house, and sit an hour or so in a great tapestried chamber, laid with furs, littered with sleeping hounds, and lit up, in fantastic shadow and shine, by a wood fire in a mediæval chimney. And then we plod back through the darkness to the inn beside the river.

How quick bright things come to confusion! When we arise next morning, the grey showers fall steadily, the trees hang limp, and the face of the stream is spoiled with dimpling raindrops. Yesterday's lilies encumber the garden walk, or begin, dismally enough, their voyage towards the Seine and the salt sea. A

sickly shimmer lies upon the dripping house-roofs, and all the colour is washed out of the green and golden landscape of last night, as though an envious man had taken a water-colour sketch and blotted it together with a sponge. We go out a-walking in the wet roads. But the roads about Grez have a trick of their own. They go on for a while among clumps of willows and patches of vine, and then, suddenly and without any warning, cease and determine in some miry hollow or upon some bald knowe; and you have a short period of hope, then right-about face, and back the way you came! So we draw about the kitchen fire and play a round game of cards for ha'pence, or go to the billiard-room for a match at corks; and by one consent a messenger is sent over for the wagonette—Grez shall be left to-morrow.

To-morrow dawns so fair that two of the party agree to walk back for exercise, and let their knapsacks follow by the trap. I need hardly say they are neither of them French; for, of all English phrases, the phrase "for exercise" is the least comprehensible across the Strait of Dover. All goes well for a while with the pedestrians. The wet woods are full of scents in the noontide. At a certain cross, where there is a guard-house, they make a halt, for the forester's wife is the daughter of their good host at Barbizon. And so there they are hospitably received by the comely woman, with one child in her arms and another prattling and tottering at her gown, and drink some syrup of quince in the back parlour, with a map of the forest on the wall, and some prints of love affairs and the great Napoleon hunting. As they draw near the Quadrilateral, and hear once more the report of the big guns, they take a by-road to avoid the sentries, and go on a while somewhat vaguely, with the sound of the cannon in their ears and the rain beginning to fall. The ways grow wider and sandier; here and there there are real sand-hills, as though by the sea-shore; the fir-wood is open and grows in clumps upon the hillocks, and the race of sign-posts is no more. One begins to look at the other

doubtfully. "I am sure we should keep more to the right," says one; and the other is just as certain they should hold to the left. And now, suddenly the heavens open, and the rain falls "sheer and strong and loud," as out of a showerbath. In a moment they are as wet as shipwrecked sailors. They cannot see out of their eyes for the drift, and the water churns and gurgles in their boots. They leave the track and try across country with a gambler's desperation, for it seems as if it were impossible to make the situation worse; and, for the next hour, go scrambling from boulder to boulder, or plod along paths that are now no more than rivulets, and across waste clearings where the scattered shells and broken fir-trees tell all too plainly of the cannon in the distance. And meantime the cannon grumble out responses to the grumbling thunder. There is such a mixture of melodrama and sheer discomfort about all this, it is at once so grey and so lurid, that it is far more agreeable to read and write about by the chimney-corner than to suffer in the person. At last they chance on the right path, and make Franchard in the early evening, the sorriest pair of wanderers that ever welcomed English ale. Thence, by the Bois d'Hyver, the Ventes-Alexandre, and the Pins Brulés, to the clean hostelry, dry clothes, and dinner.

THE WOODS IN SPRING

I think you will like the forest best in the sharp early springtime, when it is just beginning to re-awaken, and innumerable violets peep from among the fallen leaves; when two or three people at most sit down to dinner, and, at table, you will do well to keep a rug about your knees, for the nights are chill, and the salle-à-manger opens on the court. There is less to distract the attention, for one thing, and the forest is more itself. It is not bedotted with artists' sunshades as with unknown mushrooms, nor bestrewn with the remains of English picnics. The hunting still goes on, and at any moment

your heart may be brought into your mouth as you hear far-away horns; or you may be told by an agitated peasant that the Vicomte has gone up the avenue, not ten minutes since, "*à fond de train, monsieur, et avec douze piqueurs.*"

If you go up to some coign of vantage in the system of low hills that permeates the forest, you will see many different tracts of country, each of its own cold and melancholy neutral tint, and all mixed together and mingled the one into the other at the seams. You will see tracts of leafless beeches of a faint yellowish grey, and leafless oaks a little ruddier in the hue. Then zones of pine of a solemn green; and, dotted among the pines, or standing by themselves in rocky clearings, the delicate, snow-white trunks of birches, spreading out into snow-white branches yet more delicate, and crowned and canopied with a purple haze of twigs. And then a long, bare ridge of tumbled boulders, with bright sand-breaks between them, and wavering sandy roads among the bracken and brown heather. It is all rather cold and unhomely. It has not the perfect beauty, nor the gem-like colouring, of the wood in the later year, when it is no more than one vast colonnade of verdant shadow, tremulous with insects, intersected here and there by lanes of sunlight set in purple heather. The loveliness of the woods in March is not, assuredly, of this blowzy rustic type. It is made sharp with a grain of salt, with a touch of ugliness. It has a sting like the sting of bitter ale; you acquire the love of it as men acquire a taste for olives. And the wonderful clear, pure air wells into your lungs the while by voluptuous inhalations, and makes the eyes bright, and sets the heart tinkling to a new tune—or, rather, to an old tune; for you remember in your boyhood something akin to this spirit of adventure, this thirst for exploration, that now takes you masterfully by the hand, plunges you into many a deep grove, and drags you over many a stony crest. It is as if the whole wood were full of friendly voices calling you farther in, and you turn

from one side to another, like Buridan's donkey, in a maze of pleasure.

Comely beeches send up their white, straight, clustered branches, barred with green moss, like so many fingers from a half-clenched hand. Mighty oaks stand to the ankles in a fine tracery of underwood; thence the tall shaft climbs upwards, and the great forest of stalwart boughs spreads out into the golden evening sky, where the rooks are flying and calling. On the sward of the Bois d'Hyver the firs stand well asunder with outspread arms, like fencers saluting; and the air smells of resin all around, and the sound of the axe is rarely still. But strangest of all, and in appearance oldest of all, are the dim and wizard upland districts of young wood. The ground is carpeted with fir-tassel, and strewn with fir-apples and flakes of fallen bark. Rocks lie crouching in the thicket, guttered with rain, tufted with lichen, white with years and the rigours of the changeful seasons. Brown and yellow butterflies are sown and carried away again by the light air—like thistledown. The loneliness of these coverts is so excessive, that there are moments when pleasure draws to the verge of fear. You listen and listen for some noise to break the silence, till you grow half mesmerised by the intensity of the strain; your sense of your own identity is troubled; your brain reels, like that of some gymnosophist poring on his own nose in Asiatic jungles; and should you see your own outspread feet, you see them, not as anything of yours, but as a feature of the scene around you.

Still the forest is always, but the stillness is not always unbroken. You can hear the wind pass in the distance over the tree-tops; sometimes briefly, like the noise of a train; sometimes with a long steady rush, like the breaking of waves. And sometimes, close at hand, the branches move, a moan goes through the thicket, and the wood thrills to its heart. Perhaps you may hear a carriage on the road to Fontainebleau, a bird gives a dry continual chirp, the dead leaves rustle un-

derfoot, or you may time your steps to the steady recurrent strokes of the woodman's axe. From time to time over the low grounds, a flight of rooks goes by; and from time to time the cooing of wild doves falls upon the ear, not sweet and rich and near at hand as in England, but a sort of voice of the woods, thin and far away, as fits these solemn places. Or you hear suddenly the hollow, eager, violent barking of dogs; scared deer flit past you through the fringes of the wood; then a man or two running, in green blouse, with gun and game-bag on a bandoleer; and then, out of the thick of the trees, comes the jar of rifle-shots. Or perhaps the hounds are out, and horns are blown, and scarlet-coated huntsmen flash through the clearings, and the solid noise of horses galloping passes below you, where you sit perched among the rocks and heather. The boar is afoot, and all over the forest, and in all neighbouring villages, there is a vague excitement and a vague hope; for who knows whither the chase may lead? and even to have seen a single piqueur, or spoken to a single sportsman, is to be a man of consequence for the night.

Besides men who shoot and men who ride with the hounds, there are few people in the forest, in the early spring, save wood-cutters plying their axes steadily, and old women and children gathering wood for the fire. You may meet such a party coming home in the twilight: the old woman laden with a fagot of chips, and the little ones hauling a long branch behind them in her wake. That is the worst of what there is to encounter; and if I tell you of what once happened to a friend of mine, it is by no means to tantalise you with false hopes; for the adventure was unique. It was on a very cold, still, sunless morning with a flat grey sky and a frosty tingle in the air, that this friend (who shall here be nameless) heard the notes of a key-bugle played with much hesitation, and saw the smoke of a fire spread out along the green pine-tops, in a remote uncanny glen, hard by a hill of naked boulders.

He drew near warily, and beheld a picnic party seated under a tree in an open. The old father knitted a sock, the mother sat staring at the fire. The eldest son, in the uniform of a private of dragoons, was choosing out notes on a key-bugle. Two or three daughters lay in the neighbourhood, picking violets. And the whole party as grave and silent as the woods around them! My friend watched for a long time, he says; but all held their peace; not one spoke or smiled; only the dragoon kept choosing out single notes upon the bugle, and the father knitted away at his work and made strange movements the while with his flexible eyebrows. They took no notice whatever of my friend's presence, which was disquieting in itself, and increased the resemblance of the whole party to mechanical waxworks. Certainly, he affirms, a wax figure might have played the bugle with more spirit than that strange dragoon. And as this hypothesis of his became more certain, the awful insolubility of why they should be left out there in the woods with nobody to wind them up again when they ran down, and a growing disquietude of what might happen next, became too much for his courage, and he turned tail, and fairly took to his heels. It might have been a singing in his ears, but he fancies he was followed as he ran by a peal of Titanic laughter. Nothing has ever transpired to clear up the mystery; it may be they were automata; or it may be (and this is the theory to which I lean myself) that this is all another chapter of Heine's *Gods in Exile;* that the upright old man with the eyebrows was no other than Father Jove, and the young dragoon with the taste for music either Apollo or Mars.

MORALITY

Strange indeed is the attraction of the forest for the minds of men. Not one or two only, but a great chorus of grateful voices have arisen to spread abroad its fame. Half the famous writers of modern France have

had their word to say about Fontainebleau. Chateaubriand, Michelet, Béranger, George Sand, de Senancour, Flaubert, Murger, the brothers Goncourt, Théodore de Banville, each of these has done something to the eternal praise and memory of these woods. Even at the very worst of times, even when the picturesque was anathema in the eyes of all Persons of Taste, the forest still preserved a certain reputation for beauty. It was in 1730 that the Abbé Guilbert published his *Historical Description of the Palace, Town, and Forest of Fontainebleau.* And very droll it is to see him, as he tries to set forth his admiration in terms of what was then permissible. The monstrous rocks, etc., says the Abbé, "*sont admirées avec surprise des voyageurs qui s' écrient aussitôt avec Horace: Ut mihi devio rupes et vacuum nemus mirari libet.*" The good man is not exactly lyrical in his praise; and you see how he sets his back against Horace as against a trusty oak. Horace, at any rate, was classical. For the rest, however, the Abbé likes places where many alleys meet; or which, like the Belle-Étoile, are kept up "by a special gardener," and admires at the Table du Roi the labours of the Grand Master of Woods and Waters, the Sieur de la Falure, "qui a fait faire ce magnifique endroit."

But indeed, it is not so much for its beauty that the forest makes a claim upon men's hearts, as for that subtle something, that quality of the air, that emanation from the old trees, that so wonderfully changes and renews a weary spirit. Disappointed men, sick Francis Firsts and vanquished Grand Monarchs, time out of mind have come here for consolation. Hither perplexed folk have retired out of the press of life, as into a deep bay-window on some night of masquerade, and here found quiet and silence, and rest, the mother of wisdom. It is the great moral spa; this forest without a fountain is itself the great fountain of Juventus. It is the best place in the world to bring an old sorrow that has been a long while your friend and enemy; and if, like Béranger's, your gaiety has run away from

home and left open the door for sorrow to come in, of all covers in Europe, it is here you may expect to find the truant hid. With every hour you change. The air penetrates through your clothes, and nestles to your living body. You love exercise and slumber, long fasting and full meals. You forget all your scruples and live a while in peace and freedom, and for the moment only. For here, all is absent that can stimulate to moral feeling. Such people as you see may be old, or toil-worn, or sorry; but you see them framed in the forest, like figures on a painted canvas; and for you, they are not people in any living and kindly sense. You forget the grim contrariety of interests. You forget the narrow lane where all men jostle together in unchivalrous contention, and the kennel, deep and unclean, that gapes on either hand for the defeated. Life is simple enough, it seems, and the very idea of sacrifice becomes like a mad fancy out of a last night's dream.

Your ideal is not perhaps high, but it is plain and possible. You become enamoured of a life of change and movement and the open air, where the muscles shall be more exercised then the affections. When you have had your will of the forest, you may visit the whole round world. You may buckle on your knapsack and take the road on foot. You may bestride a good nag, and ride forth, with a pair of saddle-bags, into the enchanted East. You may cross the Black Forest, and see Germany wide-spread before you, like a map, dotted with old cities, walled and spired, that dream all day on their own reflections in the Rhine or Danube. You may pass the spinal cord of Europe and go down from Alpine glaciers to where Italy extends her marble moles and glasses her marble palaces in the midland sea. You may sleep in flying trains or wayside taverns. You may be awakened at dawn by the scream of the express or the small pipe of the robin in the hedge. For you the rain should allay the dust of the beaten road; the wind dry your clothes upon you as you walk. Autumn should hang out russet pears and purple grapes

along the lane; inn after inn proffer you their cups of raw wine; river after river receive your body in the sultry noon. Wherever you went warm valleys and high trees and pleasant villages should compass you about; and light fellowships should take you by the arm, and walk with you an hour upon your way. You may see from afar off what it will come to in the end—the weather-beaten red-nosed vagabond, consumed by a fever of the feet, cut off from all near touch of human sympathy, a waif, an Ishmael, and an outcast. And yet it will seem well—and yet, in the air of the forest, this will seem the best—to break all the network bound about your feet by birth and old companionship and loyal love, and bear your shovelful of phosphates to and fro, in town and country, until the hour of the great dissolvent.

Or, perhaps, you will keep to the cover. For the forest is by itself, and forest life owns small kinship with life in the dismal land of labour. Men are so far sophisticated that they cannot take the world as it is given to them by the sight of their eyes. Not only what they see and hear, but what they know to be behind, enter into their notion, of a place. If the sea, for instance, lie just across the hills, sea-thoughts will come to them at intervals, and the tenor of their dreams from time to time will suffer a sea-change. And so here, in this forest, a knowledge of its greatness is for much in the effect produced. You reckon up the miles that lie between you and intrusion. You may walk before you all day long, and not fear to touch the barrier of your Eden, or stumble out of fairyland into the land of gin and steam-hammers. And there is an old tale enhances for the imagination the grandeur of the woods of France, and secures you in the thought of your seclusion. When Charles VI. hunted in the time of his wild boyhood near Senlis, there was captured an old stag, having a collar of bronze about his neck, and these words engraved on the collar: "Cæsar mihi hoc donavit." It is no wonder if the minds of men were

moved at this occurrence and they stood aghast to find themselves thus touching hands with forgotten ages, and following an antiquity with hound and horn. And even for you, it is scarcely in an idle curiosity that you ponder how many centuries this stag had carried its free antlers through the wood, and how many summers and winters have shone and snowed on the imperial badge. If the extent of solemn wood could thus safeguard a tall stag from the hunters' hounds and horses, might not you also play hide-and-seek, in these groves, with all the pangs and trepidations of man's life, and elude Death, the mighty hunter, for more than the span of human years? Here, also, crash his arrows; here, in the farthest glade, sounds the gallop of the pale horse. But he does not hunt this cover with all his hounds, for the game is thin and small: and if you are but alert and wary, if you lodged ever in the deepest thickets, you too might live on into later generations and astonish men by your stalwart age and the trophies of an immemorial success.

For the forest takes away from you all excuse to die. There is nothing here to cabin or thwart your free desires. Here all the imprudences of the brawling world reach you no more. You may count your hours, like Endymion, by the strokes of the lone wood-cutter, or by the progression of the lights and shadows and the sun wheeling his wide circuit through the naked heavens. Here shall you see no enemies but winter and rough weather. And if a pang comes to you at all, it will be a pang of healthful hunger. All the puling sorrows, all the carking repentance, all this talk of duty that is no duty, in the great peace, in the pure daylight of these woods, fall away from you like a garment. And if perchance you come forth upon an eminence, where the wind blows upon you large and fresh, and the pines knock their long stems together, like an ungainly sort of puppets, and see far away over the plain a factory chimney defined against the pale horizon—it is for you, as for the staid and simple peasant when, with his

plough, he upturns old arms and harness from the furrow of the glebe. Ay, sure enough, there was a battle there in the old times; and, sure enough, there is a world out yonder where men strive together with a noise of oaths and weeping and clamorous dispute. So much you apprehend by an athletic act of the imagination. A faint far-off rumour as of Merovingian wars, a legend as of some dead religion.

V

HEALTH AND MOUNTAINS

THERE has come a change in medical opinion, and a change has followed in the lives of sick folk. A year or two ago and the wounded soldiery of mankind were all shut up together in some basking angle of the Riviera, walking a dusty promenade or sitting in dusty olive-yards within earshot of the interminable and unchanging surf—idle among spiritless idlers; not perhaps dying; yet hardly living either; and aspiring, sometimes fiercely, after livelier weather and some vivifying change. These were certainly beautiful places to live in, and the climate was wooing in its softness. Yet there was a latent shiver in the sunshine; you were not certain whether you were being wooed; and these mild shores would sometimes seem to you to be the shores of death. There was a lack of manly element; the air was not reactive; you might write bits of poetry and practise resignation, but you did not feel that here was a good spot to repair your tissue or regain your nerve. And it appears, after all, that there was something just in these appreciations. The invalid is now asked to lodge on wintry Alps; a ruder air shall medicine him; the demon of cold is no longer to be fled from, but bearded in his den. For even Winter has his "dear domestic cave," and in those places where he may be said to dwell for ever, tempers his austerities.

Anyone who has travelled westward by the great transcontinental railroad of America, must remember the joy with which he perceived, after the tedious prairies of Nebraska and across the vast and dismal

moorlands of Wyoming, a few snowy mountain summits along the southern sky. It is among these mountains, in the new state of Colorado, that the sick man may find, not merely an alleviation of his ailments, but the possibility of an active life and an honest livelihood. There, no longer as a lounger in a plaid, but as a working farmer, sweating at his work, he may prolong and begin anew his life. Instead of the bath-chair, the spade; instead of the regulated walk, rough journeys in the forest; and the pure, rare air of the open mountains from the miasma of the sick-room—these are the changes offered him, with what promise of pleasure and self-respect, with what a revolution in all his hopes and terrors, none but an invalid can know. Resignation, the cowardice that apes a kind of courage and that lives in the very air of health resorts, is cast aside at a breath of such a prospect. The man can open the door; he can be up and doing; he can be a kind of a man after all and not merely an invalid.

But it is a far cry to the Rocky Mountains. We cannot all of us go farming in Colorado; and there is yet a middle term, which combines the medical benefits of the new system with the moral drawbacks of the old. Again the invalid has to lie aside from life and its wholesome duties; again he has to be an idler among idlers; but this time at a great altitude, far among mountains, with the snow piled before his door and the frost-flowers every morning on his window. The mere fact is tonic to the nerves. His choice of a place of wintering has somehow to his own eyes the air of an act of bold conduct; and, since he has wilfully sought low temperatures, he is not so apt to shudder at a touch of chill. He came for that, he looked for it, and he throws it from him with the thought.

A long straight reach of valley, wall-like mountains upon either hand that rise higher and shoot up new summits the higher you climb; a few notable peaks seen even from the valley; a village of hotels; a world of black and white—black pine-woods clinging to the

sides of the valley, and white snow flouring it, and papering it between the pine-woods, and covering all the mountains with a dazzling curd; add a few score invalids marching to and fro upon the snowy road, or skating on the ice-rinks, possibly to music, or sitting under sunshades by the door of the hotel—and you have the larger features of a mountain sanatorium. A certain furious river runs curving down the valley; its pace never varies, it has not a pool for as far as you can follow it; and its unchanging senseless hurry is strangely tedious to witness. It is a river that a man could grow to hate. Day after day breaks with the rarest gold upon the mountain spires, and creeps, growing and glowing, down into the valley. From end to end the snow reverberates the sunshine; from end to end the air tingles with the light, clear and dry like crystal. Only along the course of the river, but high above it, there hangs far into the noon one waving scarf of vapour. It were hard to fancy a more engaging feature in a landscape; perhaps it is harder to believe that delicate, long-lasting phantom of the atmosphere a creature of the incontinent stream whose course it follows. By noon the sky is arrayed in an unrivalled pomp of colour—mild and pale melting in the north, but towards the zenith dark with an intensity of purple blue. What with this darkness of heaven and the intolerable lustre of the snow, space is reduced again to chaos. An English painter, coming to France late in life, declared with natural anger that "the values were all wrong." Had he got among the Alps on a bright day he might have lost his reason. And even to anyone who has looked at landscape with any care, and in any way through the spectacles of representative art, the scene has a character of insanity. The distant shining mountain peak is here beside your eye; the neighbouring dull-coloured house in comparison is miles away; the summit, which is all of splendid snow, is close at hand; the nigh slopes, which are black with pine trees, bear it no relation, and might be in another sphere.

Here there are none of those delicate gradations, those intimate, misty joinings-on and spreadings-out into the distance, nothing of that art of air and light by which the face of nature explains and veils itself in climes which we may be allowed to think more lovely. A glaring piece of crudity, where everything that is not white is a solecism and defies the judgment of the eyesight; a scene of blinding definition; a parade of daylight, almost scenically vulgar, more than scenically trying, and yet hearty and healthy, making the nerves to tighten and the mouth to smile: such is the winter daytime in the Alps. With the approach of evening all is changed. A mounain will suddenly intercept the sun; a shadow fall upon the valley; in ten minutes the thermometer will drop as many degrees; the peaks that are no longer shone upon dwindle into ghosts; and meanwhile, overhead, if the weather be rightly characteristic of the place, the sky fades towards night through a surprising key of colours. The latest gold leaps from the last mountain. Soon, perhaps, the moon shall rise, and in her gentler light the valley shall be mellowed and misted, with here and there a wisp of silver cloud upon a hill-top, and here and there a warmly glowing window in a house, between fire and starlight, kind and homely in the fields of snow.

But the valley is not seated so high among the clouds to be eternally exempt from changes. The clouds gather black as ink; the wind bursts rudely in; day after day the mists drive overhead, the snowflakes flutter down in blinding disarray; daily the mail comes in later from the top of the pass; people peer through their windows and foresee no end but an entire seclusion from Europe and death by gradual dry-rot, each in his indifferent inn; and when at last the storm goes, and the sun comes again, behold a world of unpolluted snow, glossy like fur, bright like daylight, a joy to wallowing dogs and cheerful to the souls of men. Or perhaps, from across storied and malarious Italy, a wind cunningly winds about the mountains and breaks, warm and un-

clean, upon our mountain valley. Every nerve is set ajar; the conscience recognises, at a gust, a load of sins and negligences hitherto unknown; and the whole invalid world huddles into its private chambers, and silently recognises the empire of the *Fohn*.

VI

DAVOS IN WINTER

A MOUNTAIN valley has, at the best, a certain prison-like effect on the imagination; but a mountain valley, an Alpine winter, and an invalid's weakness make up among them a prison of the most effective kind. The roads indeed are cleared, and at least one footpath dodging up the hill; but to these the health seeker is rigidly confined. There are for him no cross cuts over the field, no following of streams, no unguiding rambles in the wood. His walks are cut and dry. In five or six different directions he can push as far, and no farther, than his strength permits; never deviating from the line laid down for him and beholding at each repetition the same field of wood and snow from the same corner of the road. This, of itself, would be a little trying to the patience in the course of months; but to this is added, by the heaped mantle of the snow, an almost utter absence of detail and an almost unbroken identity of colour. Snow, it is true, is not merely white. The sun touches it with roseate and golden lights. Its own crushed infinity of crystals, its own richness of tiny sculpture, fills it, when regarded near at hand, with wonderful depths of coloured shadow, and, though wintrily transformed, it is still water, and has watery tones of blue. But, when all is said, these fields of white and blots of crude black forest are but a trite and staring substitute for the infinite variety and pleasantness of the earth's face. Even a boulder, whose front is too precipitous to have retained the snow, seems, if you come upon it in your walk, a perfect gem

of colour, reminds you almost painfully of other places, and brings into your head the delights of more Arcadian days—the path across the meadow, the hazel dell, the lilies on the stream, and the scents, the colours, and the whisper of the woods. And scents here are as rare as colours. Unless you get a gust of kitchen in passing some hotel, you shall smell nothing all day long but the faint and choking odour of frost. Sounds, too, are absent; not a bird pipes, not a bough waves, in the dead, windless atmosphere. If a sleigh goes by, the sleigh-bells ring, and that is all; you work all winter through to no other accompaniment but the crunching of your steps upon the frozen snow.

It is the curse of Alpine valleys to be each one village from one end to the other. Go where you please, houses will still be in sight, before and behind you, and to the right and left. Climb as high as an invalid is able, and it is only to spy new habitations nested in the wood. Nor is that all; for about the health resort the walks are besieged by single people walking rapidly with plaids about their shoulders, by sudden troops of German boys trying to learn to *jodel*, and by German couples silently and, as you venture to fancy, not quite happily, pursuing love's young dream. You may perhaps be an invalid who likes to make bad verses as he walks abroad. Alas! no muse will suffer this imminence of interruption—and at the second stampede of jodellers you find your modest inspiration fled. Or you may only have a taste for solitude: it may try your nerves to have some one always in front whom you are visibly overtaking, and some one always behind who is audibly overtaking you, to say nothing of a score or so who brush past you in an opposite direction. It may annoy you to take your walks and seats in public view. Alas! there is no help for it among the Alps. There are no recesses, as in Gorbio Valley by the oil-mill; no sacred solitude of olive gardens as on the Roccabruna-road; no nook as upon Saint Martin's Cape, haunted by the voice of breakers, and fragrant with

the threefold sweetness of the rosemary and the sea-pines and the sea.

For this publicity there is no cure and no alleviation; but the storms, of which you will complain so bitterly while they endure, chequer and by their contrast brighten the sameness of fair-weather scenes. When sun and storm contend together—when the thick clouds are broken up and pierced by arrows of golden daylight—there will be startling rearrangements and transfigurations of the mountain summits. A sun-dazzling spire of alps hangs suspended in mid-sky among awful glooms and blackness; or perhaps the edge of some great mountain shoulder will be designed in living gold, and appear for the duration of a glance bright like a constellation, and alone "in the unapparent." You may think you know the figure on these hills; but when they are thus revealed, they belong no longer to the things of earth—meteors we should rather call them, appearances of sun and air that endure but a moment and return no more. Other variations are more lasting, as when, for instance, heavy and wet snow has fallen through some windless hours, and the thin, spiry, mountain pine-trees stand each stock-still and loaded with shining burthen. You may drive through a forest so disguised, the tongue-tied torrent struggling silently in the cleft of the ravine, and all still except the jingle of the sleigh-bells, and you shall fancy yourself in some untrodden northern territory—Lapland, Labrador, or Alaska.

Or, possibly, you arise very early in the morning; totter downstairs in a state of somnambulism; take the simulacrum of a meal by the glimmer of one lamp in the deserted coffee-room; and find yourself by seven o'clock outside in a belated moonlight and a freezing chill. The mail sleigh takes you up and carries you on, and you reach the top of the ascent in the first hour of the day. To trace the fires of the sunrise as they pass from peak to peak, to see the unlit tree-tops as they stand out soberly against the lighted sky, to be for twenty minutes

in a wonderland of clear, fading shadows, disappearing vapours, solemn blooms of dawn, hills half glorified already with the day and still half confounded with the greyness of the western heaven—these will seem to repay you for the discomforts of that early start; but as the hour proceeds, and these enchantments vanish, you will find yourself upon the farther side in yet another Alpine valley, snow-white and coal-black, with such another long-drawn congeries of hamlets and such another senseless watercourse bickering along the foot. You have had your moment; but you have not changed the scene. The mountains are about you like a trap; you cannot foot it up a hillside and behold the sea as a great plain, but live in holes and corners, and can change only one for another.

VII

ALPINE DIVERSIONS

THERE will be no lack of diversion in an Alpine sanatorium. The place is half Englished, to be sure, the local sheet appearing in double column text and translation; but it still remains half German; and hence we have a band which is able to play, and a company of actors able, as you will be told, to act. This last you will take on trust, for the players, unlike the local sheet, confine themselves to German; and though at the beginning of the winter they come with their wig-boxes to each hotel in turn, long before Christmas they have given up the English for a bad job. There will follow, perhaps, a skirmish between the two races; the German element seeking, in the interest of their actors, to raise a mysterious item, the *Kur-taxe,* which figures heavily enough already in the weekly bills, the English element stoutly resisting. Meanwhile, in the English hotels, home-played farces, *tableaux-vivants,* and even balls enliven the evenings; a charity bazaar sheds genial consternation; Christmas and New Year are solemnised with Pantagruelian dinners, and from time to time the young folks carol and revolve untunefully enough through the figures of a singing quadrille. A magazine club supplies you with everything, from the *Quarterly* to the *Sunday at Home.* Grand tournaments are organised at chess, draughts, billiards, and whist. Once and again wandering artists drop into our mountain valley, coming you know not whence, going you cannot imagine whither, and belong-

ing to every degree in the hierarchy of musical art, from the recognised performer who announces a concert for the evening, to the comic German family or solitary long-haired German baritone who surprises the guests at dinner-time with songs and a collection. They are all of them good to see; they, at least, are moving; they bring with them the sentiment of the open road; yesterday, perhaps, they were in Tyrol, and next week they will be far in Lombardy, while all we sick folk still simmer in our mountain prison. Some of them, too, are welcome as the flowers in May for their own sake; some of them may have a human voice; some may have that magic which transforms a wooden box into a song-bird, and what we jeeringly call a fiddle into what we mention with respect as a violin. From that grinding lilt, with which the blind man, seeking pence, accompanies the beat of paddle wheels across the ferry, there is surely a difference rather of kind than degree to that unearthly voice of singing that bewails and praises the destiny of man at the touch of the true virtuoso. Even that you may perhaps enjoy; and if you do so, you will own it impossible to enjoy it more keenly than here, "im Schnee der Alpen." A hyacinth in a pot, a handful of primroses packed in moss, or a piece of music by some one who knows the way to the heart of a violin, are things that, in this invariable sameness of the snows and frosty air, surprise you like an adventure. It is droll, moreover, to compare the respect with which the invalids attend a concert, and the ready contempt with which they treat the dinner-time performers. Singing which they would hear with real enthusiasm—possibly with tears —from the corner of a drawing-room, is listened to with laughter when it is offered by an unknown professional and no money has been taken at the door.

Of skating little need be said; in so snowy a climate the rinks must be intelligently managed; their mismanagement will lead to many days of vexation and some petty quarrelling; but when all goes well, it is

certainly curious, and perhaps rather unsafe, for the invalid to skate under a burning sun and walk back to his hotel in a sweat through long tracts of glare and passages of freezing shadow. But the peculiar outdoor sport of this district is tobogganing. A Scotsman may remember the low flat board, with the front wheels on a pivot, which was called a "hurlie"; he may remember this contrivance laden with boys, as, laboriously started, it ran rattling down the brae, and was, now successfully, now unsuccessfully, steered round the corner at the foot; he may remember scented summer evenings passed in this diversion, and many a grazed skin, bloody cockscomb, and neglected lesson. The toboggan is to the hurlie what the sled is to the carriage; it is a hurlie upon runners; and if for a grating road you substitute a long declivity of beaten snow, you can imagine the giddy career of the tobogganist. The correct position is to sit; but the fantastic will sometimes sit, hindforemost, or dare the descent upon their belly or their back. A few steer with a pair of pointed sticks, but it is more classical to use the feet. If the weight be heavy and the track smooth the toboggan takes the bit between its teeth; and to steer a couple of full-sized friends in safety requires not only judgment but desperate exertion. On a very steep track, with a keen evening frost, you may have moments almost too appalling to be called enjoyment; the head goes, the world vanishes; your blind steed bounds below your weight; you reach the foot, with all the breath knocked out of your body, jarred and bewildered as though you had just been subjected to a railway accident. Another element of joyful horror is added by the formation of a train; one toboggan being tied to another, perhaps to the number of half a dozen, only the first rider being allowed to steer, and all the rest pledged to put up their feet and follow their leader, with heart in mouth, down the mad descent. This, particularly if the track begins with a headlong plunge, is one of the most exhilarating follies in the world, and

the tobogganing invalid is early reconciled to somersaults.

There is all manner of variety in the nature of the tracks, some miles in length, others but a few yards, and yet, like some short rivers, furious in their brevity. All degrees of skill and courage and taste may be suited in your neighbourhood. But perhaps the true way to toboggan is alone and at night. First comes the tedious climb, dragging your instrument behind you. Next a long breathing space, alone with snow and pine-woods, cold, silent, and solemn to the heart. Then you push off; the toboggan fetches way; she begins to feel the hill, to glide, to swim, to gallop. In a breath you are out from under the pine-trees, and a whole heavenful of stars reels and flashes overhead. Then comes a vicious effort; for by this time your wooden steed is speeding like the wind, and you are spinning round a corner, and the whole glittering valley and all the lights in all the great hotels lie for a moment at your feet; and the next you are racing once more in the shadow of the night, with close-shut teeth and beating heart. Yet a little while and you will be landed on the high road by the door of your own hotel. This, in an atmosphere tingling with forty degrees of frost, in a night made luminous with stars and snow, and girt with strange white mountains, teaches the pulse an unaccustomed tune and adds a new excitement to the life of man upon his planet.

VIII

THE STIMULATION OF THE ALPS

TO anyone who should come from a southern sanatorium to the Alps, the row of sunburned faces round that table would present the first surprise. He would begin by looking for the invalids, and he would lose his pains, for not one out of five of even the bad cases bears the mark of sickness upon his face. The plump sunshine from above and its strong reverberation from below colour the skin like an Indian climate; the treatment, which consists mainly of the open air, exposes even the sickliest to tan, and a tableful of invalids comes, in a month or two, to resemble a tableful of hunters. But although he may be thus surprised at the first glance, his astonishment will grow greater as he experiences the effects of the climate upon himself. In many ways it is a trying business to reside upon the Alps: the stomach is exercised, the appetite often languishes, the liver may at times rebel; and, because you have come so far from metropolitan advantages, it does not follow that you shall recover. But one thing is undeniable—that is, that in the rare air, clear cold, and blinding light of Alpine winters, a man takes a certain troubled delight in his existence which can nowhere else be paralleled. He is perhaps no happier, but he is stingingly alive. It does not, perhaps, come out of him in work or exercise, yet he feels an enthusiasm of the blood unknown in more temperate climates. It may not be health, but it is fun.

There is nothing more difficult to communicate on paper than this baseless ardour, this stimulation of the

brain, this sterile joyousness of spirits. You wake every morning, see the gold upon the snow peaks, become filled with courage, and bless God for your prolonged existence. The valleys are but a stride to you; you cast your shoe over the hill-tops; your ears and your heart sing; in the words of an unverified quotation from the Scottish psalms, you feel yourself fit "on the wings of all the winds" to "come flying all abroad." Europe and your mind are too narrow for that flood of energy. Yet it is notable that you are hard to root out of bed; that you start forth singing indeed, on your walk, yet are unusually ready to turn home again; that the best of you is volatile; and that although the restlessness remains till night, the strength is early at an end. With all these heady jollities, you are half conscious of an underlying languor in the body; you prove not to be so well as you had fancied; you weary before you have well begun; and though you mount at morning with the lark, that is not precisely a song-bird's heart that you bring back with you when you return with aching limbs and peevish temper to your inn.

It is hard to say wherein it lies, but this joy of Alpine winters is its own reward. Baseless, in a sense, it is more than worth more permanent improvements. The dream of health is perfect while it lasts; and if, in trying to realise it, you speedily wear out the dear hallucination, still every day, and many times a day, you are conscious of a strength you scarce possess, and a delight in living as merry as it proves to be transient. The brightness—the levity and quiet of the air; the cold stirring silence—more stirring than a tumult; the snow; the frost, the enchanted landscape: all have their part in the effect and on the memory, "tous vous tapent sur la tête"; and yet when you have enumerated all, you have gone no nearer to explain or even to qualify the delicate exhilaration that you feel—delicate, you may say, and yet excessive, greater than can be said in prose, almost greater than an invalid can bear. There is a certain wine of France, known in England in

some gaseous disguise, but when drunk in the land of its nativity, still as a pool, clean as river water, and as heady as verse. It is more than probable that in its noble natural condition this was the very wine of Anjou so beloved by Athos in the "Musketeers." Now, if the reader has ever washed down a liberal second breakfast with the wine in question, and gone forth on the back of these dilutions, into a sultry, sparkling noontide, he will have felt an influence almost as genial, although strangely grosser, than this fairy titillation of the nerves among the snow and sunshine of the Alps. That also is a mode, we need not say of intoxication, but of sobriety. Thus also a man walks in a strong sunshine of the mind, and follows smiling, insubstantial meditations. And, whether he be really so clever or so strong as he supposes, in either case he will enjoy his chimæra while it lasts.

The influence of this giddy air displays itself in many secondary ways. A certain sort of laboured pleasantry has already been recognised, and many perhaps have been remarked in these papers, as a sort peculiar to the climate. People utter their judgments with a cannonade of syllables, a big word is as good as a meal to them; and the turn of a phrase goes further than humour or wisdom. By the professional writer many sad vicissitudes have to be undergone. At first, he cannot write at all. The heart, it appears, is unequal to the pressure of business, and the brain, left without nourishment, goes into mild decline. Next, some power of work returns to him, accompanied by jumping headaches. Last, the spring is opened, and there pours at once from his pen a world of blatant, hustling polysyllables, and talk so high as, in the old joke, to be positively offensive in hot weather. He writes it in good faith and with a sense of inspiration; it is only when he comes to read what he has written that surprise and disquiet seize upon his mind. What is he to do, poor man? All his little fishes talk like whales. This yeasty inflation, this stiff and strutting architec-

ture of the sentence, has come upon him while he slept; and it is not he, it is the Alps, that are to blame. He is not, perhaps, alone, which somewhat comforts him. Nor is the ill without a remedy. Some day, when the Spring returns, he shall go down a little lower in this world, and remember quieter inflections and more modest language. But here, in the meantime, there seems to swim up some outline of a new cerebral hygiene and a good time coming, when experienced advisers shall send a man to the proper measured level for the ode, the biography, the religious tract; and a nook may be found, between the sea and Chimborazo, where Mr. Swinburne shall be able to write more continently, and Mr. Browning somewhat slower.

Is it a return of youth, or is it a congestion of the brain? It is a sort of congestion, perhaps, that leads the invalid, when all goes well, to face the new day with such a bubbling cheerfulness. It is certainly congestion that makes night hideous with visions, all the chambers of a many-storied caravanserai haunted with vociferous nightmares, and many wakeful people come down late for breakfast in the morning. Upon that theory the cynic may explain the whole affair—exhilaration, nightmares, pomp of tongue and all. But, on the other hand, the peculiar blessedness of boyhood may itself be but a symptom of the same complaint, for the two effects are strangely similar; and the frame of mind of the invalid upon the Alps is a sort of intermittent youth, with periods of lassitude. The fountain of Juventus does not play steadily in these parts; but there it plays, and possibly nowhere else.

IX

ON THE ENJOYMENT OF UNPLEASANT PLACES

(1874)

IT is a difficult matter to make the most of any given place, and we have much in our own power. Things looked at patiently from one side after another generally end by showing a side that is beautiful. A few months ago some words were said in the *Portfolio* as to an "austere regimen in scenery"; and such a discipline was then recommended as "healthful and strengthening to the taste." That is the text, so to speak, of the present essay. This discipline in scenery, it must be understood, is something more than a mere walk before breakfast to whet the appetite. For when we are put down in some unsightly neighbourhood, and especially if we have come to be more or less dependent on what we see, we must set ourselves to hunt out beautiful things with all the ardour and patience of a botanist after a rare plant. Day by day we perfect ourselves in the art of seeing nature more favourably. We learn to live with her, as people learn to live with fretful or violent spouses: to dwell lovingly on what is good, and shut our eyes against all that is bleak or inharmonious. We learn, also, to come to each place in the right spirit. The traveller, as Brantôme quaintly tells us, "*fait des discours en soi pour se soutenir en chemin*"; and into these discourses he weaves something out of all that he sees and suffers by the way; they take their tone greatly from the varying character of the scene; a sharp ascent brings dif-

ferent thoughts from a level road; and the man's fancies grow lighter as he comes out of the wood into a clearing. Nor does the scenery any more affect the thoughts than the thoughts affect the scenery. We see places through our humours as through differently coloured glasses. We are ourselves a term in the equation, a note of the chord, and make discord or harmony almost at will. There is no fear for the result, if we can but surrender ourselves sufficiently to the country that surrounds and follows us, so that we are ever thinking suitable thoughts or telling ourselves some suitable sort of story as we go. We become thus, in some sense, a centre of beauty; we are provocative of beauty, much as a gentle and sincere character is provocative of sincerity and gentleness in others. And even where there is no harmony to be elicited by the quickest and most obedient of spirits, we may still embellish a place with some attraction of romance. We may learn to go far afield for associations, and handle them lightly when we have found them. Sometimes an old print comes to our aid; I have seen many a spot lit up at once with picturesque imaginations, by a reminiscence of Callot, or Sadeler, or Paul Brill. Dick Turpin has been my lay figure for many an English lane. And I suppose the Trossachs would hardly be the Trossachs for most tourists if a man of admirable romantic instinct had not peopled it for them with harmonious figures, and brought them thither with minds rightly prepared for the impression. There is half the battle in this preparation. For instance: I have rarely been able to visit, in the proper spirit, the wild and inhospitable places of our own Highlands. I am happier where it is tame and fertile, and not readily pleased without trees. I understand that there are some phases of mental trouble that harmonise well with such surroundings, and that some persons, by the dispensing power of the imagination, can go back several centuries in spirit, and put themselves into sympathy with the hunted, houseless, unsociable way of life that was in its place

upon these savage hills. Now, when I am sad, I like nature to charm me out of my sadness, like David before Saul; and the thought of these past ages strikes nothing in me but an unpleasant pity; so that I can never hit on the right humour for this sort of landscape, and lose much pleasure in consequence. Still, even here, if I were only let alone, and time enough were given, I should have all manner of pleasures, and take many clear and beautiful images away with me when I left. When we cannot think ourselves into sympathy with the great features of a country, we learn to ignore them, and put our head among the grass for flowers, or pore, for long times together, over the changeful current of a stream. We come down to the sermon in stones, when we are shut out from any poem in the spread landscape. We begin to peep and botanise, we take an interest in birds and insects, we find many things beautiful in miniature. The reader will recollect the little summer scene in *Wuthering Heights* —the one warm scene, perhaps, in all that powerful, miserable novel—and the great feature that is made therein by grasses and flowers and a little sunshine: this is in the spirit of which I now speak. And, lastly, we can go indoors; interiors are sometimes as beautiful, often more picturesque, than the shows of the open air, and they have that quality of shelter of which I shall presently have more to say.

With all this in mind, I have often been tempted to put forth the paradox that any place is good enough to live a life in, while it is only in a few, and those highly favoured, that we can pass a few hours agreeably. For, if we only stay long enough, we become at home in the neighbourhood. Reminiscences spring up, like flowers, about uninteresting corners. We forget to some degree the superior loveliness of other places, and fall into a tolerant and sympathetic spirit which is its own reward and justification. Looking back the other day on some recollections of my own, I was astonished to find how much I owed to such a residence; six weeks in one un-

pleasant countryside had done more, it seemed, to quicken and educate my sensibilities than many years in places that jumped more nearly with my inclination.

The country to which I refer was a level and treeless plateau, over which the winds cut like a whip. For miles on miles it was the same. A river, indeed, fell into the sea near the town where I resided; but the valley of the river was shallow and bald, for as far up as ever I had the heart to follow it. There were roads, certainly, but roads that had no beauty or interest; for, as there was no timber, and but little irregularity of surface, you saw your whole walk exposed to you from the beginning: there was nothing left to fancy, nothing to expect, nothing to see by the wayside, save here and there an unhomely-looking homestead, and here and there a solitary, spectacled stone-breaker; and you were only accompanied, as you went doggedly forward, by the gaunt telegraph-posts and the hum of the resonant wires in the keen sea-wind. To one who had learned to know their song in warm pleasant places by the Mediterranean, it seemed to taunt the country, and make it still bleaker by suggested contrast. Even the waste places by the side of the road were not, as Hawthorne liked to put it, "taken back to Nature" by any decent covering of vegetation. Wherever the land had the chance, it seemed to lie fallow. There is a certain tawny nudity of the South, bare sunburnt plains, coloured like a lion, and hills clothed only in the blue transparent air; but this was of another description—this was the nakedness of the North; the earth seemed to know that it was naked, and was ashamed and cold.

It seemed to be always blowing on that coast. Indeed, this had passed into the speech of the inhabitants, and they saluted each other when they met with "Breezy, breezy," instead of the customary "Fine day" of farther south. These continual winds were not like the harvest breeze, that just keeps an equable pressure against your face as you walk, and serves to set all

the trees talking over your head, or bring round you the smell of the wet surface of the country after a shower. They were of the bitter, hard, persistent sort, that interferes with sight and respiration, and makes the eyes sore. Even such winds as these have their own merit in proper time and place. It is pleasant to see them brandish great masses of shadow. And what a power they have over the colour of the world! How they ruffle the solid woodlands in their passage, and make them shudder and whiten like a single willow! There is nothing more vertiginous than a wind like this among the woods, with all its sights and noises; and the effect gets between some painters and their sober eyesight, so that, even when the rest of their picture is calm, the foliage is coloured like foliage in a gale. There was nothing, however, of this sort to be noticed in a country where there were no trees and hardly any shadows, save the passive shadows of clouds or those of rigid houses and walls. But the wind was nevertheless an occasion of pleasure; for nowhere could you taste more fully the pleasure of a sudden lull, or a place of opportune shelter. The reader knows what I mean; he must remember how, when he has sat himself down behind a dyke on a hill-side, he delighted to hear the wind hiss vainly through the crannies at his back; how his body tingled all over with warmth, and it began to dawn upon him, with a sort of slow surprise, that the country was beautiful, the heather purple, and the far-away hills all marbled with sun and shadow. Wordsworth, in a beautiful passage of the *Prelude*, has used this as a figure for the feeling struck in us by the quiet by-streets of London after the uproar of the great thoroughfares; and the comparison may be turned the other way with as good effect:

> "Meanwhile the roar continues, till at length,
> Escaped as from an enemy, we turn
> Abruptly into some sequester'd nook,
> Still as a shelter'd place when winds blow loud!"

I remember meeting a man once, in a train, who told me of what must have been quite the most perfect instance of this pleasure of escape. He had gone up, one sunny, windy morning, to the top of a great cathedral somewhere abroad; I think it was Cologne Cathedral, the great unfinished marvel by the Rhine; and after a long while in dark stairways, he issued at last into the sunshine, on a platform high above the town. At that elevation it was quite still and warm; the gale was only in the lower strata of the air, and he had forgotten it in the quiet interior of the church and during his long ascent; and so you may judge of his surprise when, resting his arms on the sunlit balustrade and looking over into the *Place* far below him, he saw the good people holding on their hats and leaning hard against the wind as they walked. There is something, to my fancy, quite perfect in this little experience of my fellow-traveller's. The ways of men seem always very trivial to us when we find ourselves alone on a church-top, with the blue sky and a few tall pinnacles, and see far below us the steep roofs and foreshortened buttresses, and the silent activity of the city streets; but how much more must they not have seemed so to him as he stood, not only above other men's business, but above other men's climate, in a golden zone like Apollo's!

This was the sort of pleasure I found in the country of which I write. The pleasure was to be out of the wind, and to keep it in memory all the time, and hug oneself upon the shelter. And it was only by the sea that any such sheltered places were to be found. Between the black worm-eaten headlands there are little bights and havens, well screened from the wind and the commotion of the external sea, where the sand and weeds look up into the gazer's face from a depth of tranquil water, and the sea-birds, screaming and flickering from the ruined crags, alone disturb the silence and the sunshine. One such place has impressed itself on my memory beyond all others. On a rock by the

water's edge, old fighting men of the Norse breed had planted a double castle; the two stood wall to wall like semi-detached villas; and yet feud had run so high between their owners, that one, from out of a window, shot the other as he stood in his own doorway. There is something in the juxtaposition of these two enemies full of tragic irony. It is grim to think of bearded men and bitter women taking hateful counsel together about the two hall-fires at night, when the sea boomed against the foundations and the wild winter wind was loose over the battlements. And in the study we may reconstruct for ourselves some pale figure of what life then was. Not so when we are there; when we are there such thoughts come to us only to intensify a contrary impression, and association is turned against itself. I remember walking thither three afternoons in succession, my eyes weary with being set against the wind, and how, dropping suddenly over the edge of the down, I found myself in a new world of warmth and shelter. The wind, from which I had escaped, "as from an enemy," was seemingly quite local. It carried no clouds with it, and came from such a quarter that it did not trouble the sea within view. The two castles, black and ruinous as the rocks about them, were still distinguishable from these by something more insecure and fantastic in the outline, something that the last storm had left imminent and the next would demolish entirely. It would be difficult to render in words the sense of peace that took possession of me on these three afternoons. It was helped out, as I have said, by the contrast. The shore was battered and bemauled by previous tempests; I had the memory at heart of the insane strife of the pigmies who had erected these two castles and lived in them in mutual distrust and enmity, and knew I had only to put my head out of this little cup of shelter to find the hard wind blowing in my eyes; and yet there were the two great tracts of motionless blue air and peaceful sea looking on, unconcerned and apart, at the turmoil of the present mo-

ment and the memorials of the precarious past. There is ever something transitory and fretful in the impression of a high wind under a cloudless sky; it seems to have no root in the constitution of things; it must speedily begin to faint and wither away like a cut flower. And on those days the thought of the wind and the thought of human life came very near together in my mind. Our noisy years did indeed seem moments in the being of the eternal silence: and the wind, in the face of that great field of stationary blue, was as the wind of a butterfly's wing. The placidity of the sea was a thing likewise to be remembered. Shelley speaks of the sea as "hungering for calm," and in this place one learned to understand the phrase. Looking down into these green waters from the broken edge of the rock, or swimming leisurely in the sunshine, it seemed to me that they were enjoying their own tranquillity; and when now and again it was disturbed by a wind ripple on the surface, or the quick black passage of a fish far below, they settled back again (one could fancy) with relief.

On shore too, in the little nook of shelter, everything was so subdued and still that the least particular struck in me a pleasurable surprise. The desultory crackling of the whin-pods in the afternoon sun usurped the ear. The hot, sweet breath of the bank, that had been saturated all day long with sunshine, and now exhaled it into my face, was like the breath of a fellow-creature. I remember that I was haunted by two lines of French verse; in some dumb way they seemed to fit my surroundings and give expression to the contentment that was in me, and I kept repeating to myself—

> "Mon cœur est un luth suspendu,
> Sitôt qu'on le touche, il résonne."

I can give no reason why these lines came to me at this time; and for that very cause I repeat them here. For all I know, they may serve to complete the impression

in the mind of the reader, as they were certainly a part of it for me.

And this happened to me in the place of all others where I liked least to stay. When I think of it I grow ashamed of my own ingratitude. "Out of the strong came forth sweetness." There, in the bleak and gusty North, I received, perhaps, my strongest impression of peace. I saw the sea to be great and calm; and the earth, in that little corner, was all alive and friendly to me. So, wherever a man is, he will find something to please and pacify him: in the town he will meet pleasant faces of men and women, and see beautiful flowers at a window, or hear a cage-bird singing at the corner of the gloomiest street; and for the country, there is no country without some amenity—let him only look for it in the right spirit, and he will surely find.

X

ROADS

(1873)

NO amateur will deny that he can find more pleasure in a single drawing, over which he can sit a whole quiet forenoon, and so gradually study himself into humour with the artist, than he can ever extract from the dazzle and accumulation of incongruous impressions that send him, weary and stupefied, out of some famous picture-gallery. But what is thus admitted with regard to art is not extended to the (so-called) natural beauties: no amount of excess in sublime mountain outline or the graces of cultivated lowland can do anything, it is supposed, to weaken or degrade the palate. We are not at all sure, however, that moderation, and a regimen tolerably austere, even in scenery, are not healthful and strengthening to the taste; and that the best school for a lover of nature is not to be found in one of those countries where there is no stage effect—nothing salient or sudden—but a quiet spirit of orderly and harmonious beauty pervades all the details, so that we can patiently attend to each of the little touches that strike in us, all of them together, the subdued note of the landscape. It is in scenery such as this that we find ourselves in the right temper to seek out small sequestered loveliness. The constant recurrence of similar combinations of colour and outline gradually forces upon us a sense of how the harmony has been built up, and we become familiar with something of nature's mannerism. This is the true

pleasure of your "rural voluptuary"—not to remain awe-stricken before a Mount Chimborazo; not to sit deafened over the big drum in the orchestra, but day by day to teach himself some new beauty—to experience some new vague and tranquil sensation that has before evaded him. It is not the people who "have pined and hungered after nature many a year, in the great city pent," as Coleridge said in the poem that made Charles Lamb so much ashamed of himself; it is not those who make the greatest progress in this intimacy with her, or who are most quick to see and have the greatest gusto to enjoy. In this, as in everything else, it is minute knowledge and long-continued loving industry that make the true dilettante. A man must have thought much over scenery before he begins fully to enjoy it. It is no youngling enthusiasm on hill-tops that can possess itself of the last essence of beauty. Probably most people's heads are growing bare before they can see all in a landscape that they have the capability of seeing; and, even then, it will be only for one little moment of consummation before the faculties are again on the decline, and they that look out of the windows begin to be darkened and restrained in sight. Thus the study of nature should be carried forward thoroughly and with system. Every gratification should be rolled long under the tongue, and we should be always eager to analyse and compare, in order that we may be able to give some plausible reason for our admirations. True, it is difficult to put even approximately into words the kind of feelings thus called into play. There is a dangerous vice inherent in any such intellectual refining upon vague sensation. The analysis of such satisfactions lends itself very readily to literary affectations; and we can all think of instances where it has shown itself apt to exercise a morbid influence, even upon an author's choice of language and the turn of his sentences. And yet there is much that makes the attempt attractive; for any expression, however imperfect, once given to a cherished feeling, seems

a sort of legitimation of the pleasure we take in it. A common sentiment is one of those great goods that make life palatable and ever new. The knowledge that another has felt as we have felt, and seen things, even if they are little things, not much otherwise than we have seen them, will continue to the end to be one of life's choicest pleasures.

Let the reader, then, betake himself in the spirit we have recommended to some of the quieter kinds of English landscape. In those homely and placid agricultural districts, familiarity will bring into relief many things worthy of notice, and urge them pleasantly home to him by a sort of loving repetition; such as the wonderful life-giving speed of windmill sails above the stationary country; the occurrence and recurrence of the same church tower at the end of one long vista after another: and, conspicuous among these sources of quiet pleasure, the character and variety of the road itself, along which he takes his way. Not only near at hand, in the lithe contortions with which it adapts itself to the interchanges of level and slope, but far away also, when he sees a few hundred feet of it upheaved against a hill and shining in the afternoon sun, he will find it an object so changeful and enlivening that he can always pleasurably busy his mind about it. He may leave the riverside, or fall out of the way of villages, but the road he has always with him; and, in the true humour of observation, will find in that sufficient company. From its subtle windings and changes of level there arises a keen and continuous interest, that keeps the attention ever alert and cheerful. Every sensitive adjustment to the contour of the ground, every little dip and swerve, seems instinct with life and an exquisite sense of balance and beauty. The road rolls upon the easy slopes of the country, like a long ship in the hollows of the sea. The very margins of waste ground, as they trench a little farther on the beaten way, or recede again to the shelter of the hedge, have something of the same free delicacy of line—of the same swing

and wilfulness. You might think for a whole summer's day (and not have thought it any nearer an end by evening) what concourse and succession of circumstances has produced the least of these deflections; and it is, perhaps, just in this that we should look for the secret of their interest. A footpath across a meadow—in all its human waywardness and unaccountability, in all the *grata protervitas* of its varying direction—will always be more to us than a railroad well engineered through a difficult country.[1] No reasoned sequence is thrust upon our attention: we seem to have slipped for one lawless little moment out of the iron rule of cause and effect; and so we revert at once to some of the pleasant old heresies of personification, always poetically orthodox, and attribute a sort of free will, an active and spontaneous life, to the white riband of road that lengthens out, and bends, and cunningly adapts itself to the inequalities of the land before our eyes. We remember, as we write, some miles of fine wide highway laid out with conscious æsthetic artifice through a broken and richly cultivated tract of country. It is said that the engineer had Hogarth's line of beauty in his mind as he laid them down. And the result is striking. One splendid satisfying sweep passes with easy transition into another, and there is nothing to trouble or dislocate the strong continuousness of the main line of the road. And yet there is something wanting. There is here no saving imperfection, none of those secondary curves and little trepidations of direction that carry, in natural roads, our curiosity actively along with them. One feels at once that this road has not grown like a natural road, but has been laboriously made to pattern; and that, while a model may be academically correct in outline, it will always be inanimate and cold. The traveller is also aware of a sympathy of mood between himself and the road he

[1] Compare Blake, in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell:* "Improvement makes us straight roads; but the crooked roads, without improvement, are roads of Genius."

travels. We have all seen ways that have wandered into heavy sand near the sea-coast, and trail wearily over the dunes like a trodden serpent: here we too must plod forward at a dull, laborious pace; and so a sympathy is preserved between our frame of mind and the expression of the relaxed, heavy curves of the roadway. Such a phenomenon, indeed, our reason might perhaps resolve with a little trouble. We might reflect that the present road had been developed out of a track spontaneously followed by generations of primitive wayfarers; and might see in its expression a testimony that those generations had been affected at the same ground, one after another, in the same manner as we are affected to-day. Or we might carry the reflection further, and remind ourselves that where the air is invigorating and the ground firm under the traveller's foot, his eye is quick to take advantage of small undulations, and he will turn carelessly aside from the direct way wherever there is anything beautiful to examine or some promise of a wider view; so that even a bush of wild roses may permanently bias and deform the straight path over the meadow; whereas, where the soil is heavy, one is preoccupied with the labour of mere progression, and goes with a bowed head heavily and unobservantly forward. Reason, however, will not carry us the whole way; for the sentiment often recurs in situations where it is very hard to imagine any possible explanation; and indeed, if we drive briskly along a good, well-made road in an open vehicle, we shall experience this sympathy almost at its fullest. We feel the sharp settle of the springs at some curiously twisted corner; after a steep ascent, the fresh air dances in our faces as we rattle precipitately down the other side, and we find it difficult to avoid attributing something headlong, a sort of *abandon,* to the road itself.

The mere winding of that path is enough to enliven a long day's walk in even a commonplace or dreary country-side. Something that we have seen from miles back, upon an eminence, is so long hid from us, as we

wander through folded valleys or among woods, that our expectation of seeing it again is sharpened into a violent appetite, and as we draw nearer we impatiently quicken our steps and turn every corner with a beating heart. It is through these prolongations of expectancy, this succession of one hope to another, that we live out long seasons of pleasure in a few hours' walk. It is in following these capricious sinuosities that we learn, only bit by bit and through one coquettish reticence after another, much as we learn the heart of a friend, the whole loveliness of the country. This disposition always preserves something new to be seen, and takes us, like a careful cicerone, to many different points of distant view before it allows us finally to approach the hoped-for destination.

In its connection with the traffic, and whole friendly intercourse with the country, there is something very pleasant in that succession of saunterers and brisk and business-like passers-by, that peoples our ways and helps to build up what Walt Whitman calls "the cheerful voice of the public road, the gay, fresh sentiment of the road." But out of the great network of ways that binds all life together from the hill-farm to the city, there is something individual to most, and, on the whole, nearly as much choice on the score of company as on the score of beauty or easy travel. On some we are never long without the sound of wheels, and folk pass us by so thickly that we lose the sense of their number. But on others, about little-frequented districts, a meeting is an affair of moment; we have the sight far off of some one coming toward us, the growing definiteness of the person, and then the brief passage and salutation, and the road left empty in front of us for perhaps a great while to come. Such encounters have a wistful interest that can hardly be understood by the dweller in places more populous. We remember standing beside a countryman once, in the mouth of a quiet by-street in a city that was more than ordinarily crowded and bustling; he seemed stunned and bewildered by the

continual passage of different faces; and after a long pause, during which he appeared to search for some suitable expression, he said timidly that there seemed to be a *great deal of meeting thereabouts*. The phrase is significant. It is the expression of town-life in the language of the long, solitary country highways. A meeting of one with one was what this man had been used to in the pastoral uplands from which he came; and the concourse of the streets was in his eyes only an extraordinary multiplication of such "meetings."

And now we come to that last and most subtle quality of all, to that sense of prospect, of outlook, that is brought so powerfully to our minds by a road. In real nature as well as in old landscapes, beneath that impartial daylight in which a whole variegated plain is plunged and saturated, the line of the road leads the eye forth with the vague sense of desire up to the green limit of the horizon. Travel is brought home to us, and we visit in spirit every grove and hamlet that tempts us in the distance. *Sehnsucht*—the passion for what is ever beyond—is livingly expressed in that white riband of possible travel that severs the uneven country; not a ploughman following his plough up the shining furrow, not the blue smoke of any cottage in a hollow, but is brought to us with a sense of nearness and attainability by this wavering line of junction. There is a passionate paragraph in *Werther* that strikes the very key. "When I came hither," he writes, "how the beautiful valley invited me on every side, as I gazed down into it from the hill-top! There the wood —ah, that I might mingle in its shadows! there the mountain summits—ah, that I might look down from them over the broad country! the interlinked hills! the secret valleys! O, to lose myself among their mysteries! I hurried into the midst, and came back without finding aught I hoped for. Alas! the distance is like the future. A vast whole lies in the twilight before our spirit; sight and feeling alike plunge and lose themselves in the prospect, and we yearn to surrender our

whole being, and let it be filled full with all the rapture of one single glorious sensation; and alas! when we hasten to the fruition, when *there* is changed to *here*, all is afterwards as it was before, and we stand in our indigent and cramped estate, and our soul thirsts after a still ebbing elixir." It is to this wandering and uneasy spirit of anticipation that roads minister. Every little vista, every little glimpse that we have of what lies before us, gives the impatient imagination rein, so that it can outstrip the body and already plunge into the shadow of the woods, and overlook from the hilltop the plain beyond it, and wander in the windings of the valleys that are still far in front. The road is already there—we shall not be long behind. It is as if we were marching with the rear of a great army, and, from far before, heard the acclamation of the people as the vanguard entered some friendly and jubilant city. Would not every man, through all the long miles of march, feel as if he also were within the gates?

JUVENILIA

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JUVENILIA

I

HISTORY OF MOSES

THERE was a woman that had a child when all the babies were to be drowned and she was a good woman and she asked God how she could save her baby and God told her to make a basket of rushes and put it in the water, hiding it in the rushes. Then Pharaoh's daughter was going to bathe in a certain place and as she went past she saw the cradle and asked her servants to go and bring it out and they did it. When they brought it out they lifted the thing up that was on the top and they saw a baby crying. Then they saw the child's sister that was standing far away and Pharaoh's daughter cried to her to come and when she came she told her to call a nurse for the baby and then she ran and brought the mother of it and she told the mother to take charge of it and to come to the palace and so she came.

Then Moses when he was grown up was sent away to show some wonders to the Israelites and God told him the things he was to do. He first told him to lay down his rod and when he laid it down it became a serpent. Then he told him to go and do it when he was with the Israelites and he said he would do it. Then God told him to put his hand into his breast and he did so and his hand became a leper, then he pulled it out and he put it in again and when he pulled it out it was just the way it was before. Then God told him to do that and he went away home to the house

that he lived in and God told him that he would have to go to the Israelites. Then he went away to the Israelites.

One day Moses saw an Egyptian whipping an Israelite and he came and killed the Egyptian. It was not wrong of Moses to kill the Egyptian because he was doing harm to the Israelite for he was an Israelite too. After that God told Aaron and Moses to go up and try to make Pharaoh let the Israelites go away and then Aaron and Moses went up to speak to him and asked him if he would allow them to go and Pharaoh said no that he wouldn't. Then Aaron laid down the rod and behold it became a serpent. He took it by the tail and pulled it up and it turned into a rod. He put his hand into his breast and it became a leper and he put it in again and it was just as it was before. Then the Egyptians took all their rods and laid them down and they became serpents. Pharaoh said that he would let them go but he hardened his heart and would not. When Pharaoh was going to bathe at a certain place Aaron stretched his rod over the water and it became blood. Then Pharaoh went home in despair and he said he would let them go but he hardened his heart again. Then Aaron stretched out his rod and frogs came forth and crept over all the beds and eat up all the food and everything and he said he would let them go but he hardened his heart again.

Then the next plague was little insects called lice which went all over the country. After that he sent swarms of flies which buzzed about in the most horrible manner. Then boils came all over the people even over Pharaoh and his servants. After that came deaths of beasts and nearly all the beasts died. Then God sent hail and rain and fire and thunder and before he sent it he told Pharaoh and all his people to keep in their houses. After that it happened all the grass was taken away and all the leaves off the trees by locusts. Then it turned all darkness and it was all light beside the Israelites. And God said to the Israelites that they

must get all ready and stand round at a table eating a lamb and spread the blood of the lamb on the lintels of their doors for that the angel of death was going to pass to kill all the babies but whoever has the blood on the lintels wouldn't have their babies killed. Then when the Egyptians had gone to bed thinking of no danger, the angel of death passed through and every baby even Pharaoh's first born was killed and there was a great cry over all the land. Then Pharaoh cried for Moses and Aaron as quickly as possible and he said that they must go away as fast as they could and they all went and took their bags of meat and their flocks and they asked the women of Egypt to give them some gold and silver and they did so.

They came to a sea called the Red Sea, now don't suppose it was red like blood, so the black cloud stood still that had led them all the way and they encamped and soon they heard a great noise of horses and chariots and it was the Egyptians coming after them. They then told Moses to go and pray to God and he did so. Then God told Moses to stretch out his rod over the Red Sea and he did so. Lo and behold the waters went up on each side of a dry path like walls, then the Israelites went into the path to cross. After they had got a little way across the Egyptians came up and they saw a dry path and they determined to go over it. They had not got very far across when lo and behold to their terror the wheels of their chariots stuck like as if in mud as God poured down his wrath and the thunder roared and such lightnings as were never seen in Egypt (this is in line upon line). God told Moses to stretch his rod over the water and he did so and the walls of water came down upon the tops of the Egyptians and they were drowned.

Then the Israelites were very hungry and they began to speak to Moses about it. Then Moses prayed to God and God told Moses that the Israelites were to get up very early in the morning and they would see small white things on the ground and they were to

gather it but they were not to gather any for to-morrow because it would breed worms and stink and they could not eat it but on Saturdays they were to gather some for Sundays because on Sundays they would not see any little white things. So they rose up early in the morning and they went out and they did see little white things and they called it manna. It tasted like honey. Then they were thirsty and they murmured against Moses and against God and so Moses went to pray to God and God told Moses to go up to a rock with a few men and to strike the rock with his rod and water would come out, so he did so and water came flowing forth. Then they travelled on through the wilderness and they came to a mount called Sinai. God told Moses to come up to him in the mount and Moses went up. God told Moses that he was to tell the Israelites to wash their clothes for they were to hear him speaking on the third day. They did so and on the third morning they heard his voice and the trumpet sounded loud. And he was to put railing round the mountain and he was not to let any of the people touch the mountain or the railings. Moses stayed forty days and forty nights with God and God gave him two tables of stone with ten commandments written on them and the Israelites thought the time so long they thought he was never to come back so they asked Aaron to make them a golden calf. He told them to give all their gold earrings and things so he melted them and took it out and when it was soft he cut it into the shape of a calf. Then he took it and put it upon a high place and he said they should have a great feast to-morrow and so they had a grand feast and they danced round the calf and cried, "This is the one who brought us out of Egypt," and Moses was coming down at that time and he saw the Israelites dancing round the image and he broke the tables of stone because he was so angry and he came down very quickly and took the calf and melted it and ground it into powder and threw it into some water and made them drink it and God said that

somebody must take a sword and kill some of them and Moses asked God not to kill the whole of them and said, " Remember what you promised to Jacob."

Then Moses went up into the mount again and God told him to make a tabernacle and he told him of two clever men which could help them, to carve wood and things. Their names were Bezaleel and Aholiab. When Moses went down they could not look upon him because he shone with the glory of God and he put a veil over his face. Then he told the Israelites that they were to make a tabernacle for God and Moses asked them for their gold and silver and all their beautiful things to make it of and they gave them. In the court of the tabernacle there was a brazen altar for offering lambs and oxes upon and there was a brazen basin a little farther in, in which the priests used to wash the dishes and their hands. Then in the inside in the holy place there was a golden altar for burning incense on and a candlestick which had seven lamps upon it. Then draw up the veil of the tabernacle, you will see the Holy of Holies and in it a large box of gold, the top of which was called the Mercy Seat and there was two gold angels that bent their wings over the top, in the inside there was Aaron's budding rod and the tables of stone. The Holy of Holies was a light place because the glory of God was in it.

After the Israelites left Mount Sinai they came to a place near Canaan and they sent twelve men to see what like it was. When they had come into it they saw a great vine and so they plucked a bunch of grapes and one man could not carry it so they took a long staff and tied the grapes to it and Caleb and Joshua carried it and the rest carried figs and pomegranates. Then when they came to the Israelites they asked what kind of place it was and they said that the cities had strong gates and walls and that the people were giants and they were just like grasshoppers beside them. Then the Israelites said no, they would never conquer them. Then Caleb and Joshua struck up and said yes they

would for God would help them for the people in Canaan only worshipped images. But the people did not believe Caleb and Joshua and sat up all night moaning and crying. Then God was angry and said they would never come into Canaan but were to wander forty years in the wilderness, but their children when they grew up were to go into Canaan and Caleb and Joshua were to go. They travelled away from that place back into the wilderness then they murmured and said to Moses, " Why did you bring us out of Egypt? Here we have neither water nor food." Then Moses prayed to God and God told him to take his rod and speak to the rock. Then Moses went away and took his rod and Aaron came with Moses and they said, " Here now ye rebels must we bring you water out of this rock," and Moses struck the rock with his rod and water came flowing forth and God said to Moses and Aaron that they should not go into Canaan but should die and Moses prayed to God and asked him if he might not go into it and God told him not to pray any more because he should not go into it but God said to Moses that he should not die as soon as Aaron.

Then when they came to a place in the wilderness there was a great lot of serpents and their mouths burned like fire and God sent them among them when they murmured and they bit them and it made them very ill and they said to Moses to pray to God that he might take away the serpents from them. Then God told Moses to take some brass and soften it in the fire and to cut it into the shape of one of the serpents and to put it upon a pole and to hold up the pole and the Israelites who looked at the serpent would get better. That should put us in mind of Jesus, because the old Serpent the Devil bit us, that means made us naughty and when we look at Jesus that makes us better—not to look at Jesus with our eyes but to look with praying. Then God took away the serpents and when the Israelites looked at the brazen serpent they were quite well.

Then God said to Moses that he would have to die and God sent Moses alone up to a high hill called Nebo where he could see the whole land of Canaan and God buried him in a valley in the land of Moab and nobody knows where Moses was buried to this day. And there was great weeping in all Israel for Moses.

II

THE BOOK OF JOSEPH

BY R. L. B. S.

THE AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF MOSES"

CHAPTER I

JOSEPH IS SOLD AS A SLAVE

JACOB of old married two wives; one of his wives was called Rachael & the other Leah. Rachael's eldest son was Joseph which I intend to found my story on. Well, Joseph was his father's favourite & so his father made him a coat of many colours. Joseph had eleven brothers & they envied him very much. Well, one day the brothers were feeding their sheep afar off & Joseph's father said to him that he was to go with some loaves to his brethern. When Joseph came to the place they were not there & he met a man when he was searching for them & the man said that his brethern had gone over to Dothan and when Joseph was very far off they saw him coming. Now Joseph had dreamt that he and his brethern had been out cutting corn in the fields and binding sheaves & it came to pass that all his brethern's sheaves bowed down to his sheaf & he told his dream to his brethern. And he also dreamed another dream. He thought he was a star and that the sun & the moon & 11 stars bowed down to him & he told that dream also to his brethern from which he derived the name of the dreamer. Well, when they

saw him, they said among themselves "behold this dreamer cometh, come let us kill him" but Reuben said "do not slay him but put him into this pit here" by which means Reuben intended to get Joseph by stealth to his father, however this plan failed as you shall hear. Well, when Joseph came up to them, they laid hands upon him & cast him into the pit. Well, Reuben went away, but when he came back, he was alarmed when he came back by the following occurrence. When the other brethern had sat down to meat there came in sight some camels and mules with a lot of merchants with spices & they said among one another "let us sell him to those merchants." Well, when the merchants came up they asked how much they would give for him & they said three talents of silver. So they drew Joseph out of the pit & sold him to the merchants. And they carried him down to Egypt where they sold him to the captain of Pharaoh's guard.

Well, the wife of Potiphar brought out false accusations against Joseph & got him put in prison. There happened to be in the jail the chief baker of Pharaoh and the chief butler of Pharaoh. Well, one night they each dreamt a dream & the butler & the baker knew not the meaning of it. When Joseph heard it he said he knew the meaning of it, he said that in three days the butler would be restored out of jail & would squeeze the grapes into the cup of Pharaoh again. And as to the baker's dream, he said that in three days the baker would be hung upon a tree & the birds would pick his flesh & it came to pass as you shall hear, for in three days was Pharaoh's birthday & and all manner of justice was to be done that day, so the chief butler was restored and the chief baker was hanged. The Chief Butler did not remember Joseph but forgot him.

CHAPTER II

THE DREAM AND ITS INTERPRETATION

Now, it came to pass that Pharaoh dreamt a dream & he dreamed that he stood by the water & there came out of the water 7 well fed fat kine & they grazed in a meadow & also there came up out of the water 7 lean ill favoured kine & they eat up the fat ones but seemed none the fatter of it. And Pharaoh awoke & behold it was a dream & he fell asleep and dreamed again & behold he was standing by the water again & there came up out of the water 7 good ears of wheat on one stalk & also out of the same water there came 7 lean and ill favoured ears of wheat & they eat up the fat ones but were none the fatter of it & Pharaoh awoke & behold it was a dream. In the morning he called all the magicians and wise men of Egypt, but they could not interpret it. Then the chief butler said, " I do remember my faults this day for when the chief baker & I displeased King Pharaoh & he cast us both into prison & we both dreamed a dream & there happened to be an Hebrew lad with us in the jail & he interpreted our dream & it came to pass according to his interpretation. So Pharaoh sent to the prison for Joseph & Joseph shaved and put on new raiment & came before Pharaoh & Pharaoh told him his dream & Joseph said the dream is one & he said that the 7 kine & the 7 ears were years & that 7 fat kine & full ears were years of plenty & the seven thin kine & blasted ears were years of famine & he told Pharaoh to put a wise man over the nation & gather up a fifth of the corn during the years of plenty for store during the years of famine. This interpretation pleased Pharaoh & he said, There is not a wiser man in the country than thou & he set

him over the land & he got the second chariot to ride in & he put a chain round his neck & a ring on his finger & Pharaoh's servants went before him saying, "bow the knee."

CHAPTER III

THE FAMINE

Now, when the 7 years of plenty were come, Joseph took all the wheat & corn & barley from the fields round the cities & laid it up in barns. And behold the famine waxed sore over the face of the world & Joseph's brethern heard that there was corn in Egypt & came down on asses with sacks & they came unto Joseph for it was Joseph that sold the corn.

Now, Joseph knew his brethern, but they did not know him & he spoke roughly to them & said that they were spies come to spy the nakedness of the land & they said no, that they were 12 brethern & that the youngest was at home with their father & that one was not. But he would not believe them & said that they must bring down their brother to let him see him. And he took Simeon out of their midst & bound him & put him in jail & said that the others must go & bring down their brother. So they went their way & as one of them opened his sack, he found his bag of money on the top & they were sorely afraid at this & said, "What hath the Lord done to us." When they came home the others opened their sacks & they found their money, too. And when they told their father that Benjamin must go to Egypt, he was very sorry & said Joseph is not & Simeon is not & will ye take Benjamin away; if evil befals him ye will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

CHAPTER IV

JOSEPH MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN TO HIS BRETHERN & HIS FATHER COMES DOWN TO EGYPT

And when the food which the brothers had brought was exhausted, their father said, " Go up to the man & buy some more corn that we may eat." They said that the man had said that they should not see his face again until their brother came down but Jacob did not want him to go lest peradventure evil should befal him. Then Judah said that he would answer for Benjamin's safety with the life of his two sons & so their father answered and said unto them " Take spices & almonds & nuts & make a present unto the governor & take also Benjamin with you & take double money." When Joseph heard that his brothers had come he said, " Kill and make ready for these men shall dine with me to-day at noon."

When the brethern came in they were afraid and talked at the door of Joseph's house to the keeper & he said, " Do not be afraid. Your money is with me " and they made the present ready against Joseph coming at noon for they heard that they were to dine with him. The keeper let Simeon out to them. When Joseph came and looked and saw Benjamin, he said, " Is this your younger brother that ye spake about & he said to Benjamin, " God be gracious unto thee, my son." And Joseph made haste & went into his chamber & wept & then he came out & restrained his feelings. Then he said, " Lay bread." They set bread for Joseph alone, for his brethern next, then for the Egyptians who eat with him next all alone. For the Egyptians may not eat bread with the Hebrews. Joseph commanded his steward to put his cup into the mouth of the young-

est's sack & he also commanded him to put their money in the mouths of their sacks & he said that he should run after them as soon as they were out of sight & ask them why they had stolen these things & why they had rewarded evil for good.

The steward did so & overtook them & he said unto them what he had been told, then they opened every one his sack, beginning at the eldest and ending at the youngest & the cup was found in Benjamin's sack & they came back & Joseph said unto them "What is this that ye have done?" and Judah came forward & told him that he had wished them to bring their youngest brother & that their father would hardly let them & that if he kept Benjamin, he would bring down their father's grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. Then Joseph wept & he said unto them, "I am Joseph whom ye sold unto Egypt, is my father yet alive?" & they were terrified & he said, be not grieved that ye sold me for I was sent here by God to save life. And Joseph told them to bring their Father down in haste.

III

THE PENTLAND RISING

A PAGE OF HISTORY

1666

"A cloud of witnesses ly here,
Who for Christ's interest did appear."
Inscription on Battle-field at Rullion Green.

This little pamphlet, written when Stevenson was just sixteen, was published at the end of 1866 in a small edition, of which the greater number of copies were bought up by his father. The account was the outcome of the interest taken by Stevenson in the stories of the Covenanters, that he had learned in childhood from his nurse and that, at an even earlier age, he had endeavored to express in the form of fiction.

III

THE PENTLAND RISING

I

THE CAUSES OF THE REVOLT

"Halt, passenger; take heed what thou dost see,
This tomb doth show for what some men did die."
Monument, Greyfriars' Churchyard, Edinburgh, 1661-1668.[1]

TWO hundred years ago a tragedy was enacted in Scotland, the memory whereof has been in great measure lost or obscured by the deeper tragedies which followed it. It is, as it were, the evening of the night of persecution—a sort of twilight, dark indeed to us, but light as the noonday when compared with the midnight gloom which followed. This fact, of its being the very threshold of persecution, lends it, however, an additional interest.

The prejudices of the people against Episcopacy were "out of measure increased," says Bishop Burnet, "by the new incumbents, who were put in the place of the ejected preachers, and were generally very mean and despicable in all respects. They were the worst preachers I ever heard; they were ignorant to a reproach; and many of them were openly vicious. They were indeed the dregs and refuse of the northern parts. Those of them who rose above contempt or scandal were men

[1] Theatre of Mortality, p. 10, Edin. 1713.

of such violent tempers that they were as much hated as the others were despised." [1] It was little to be wondered at, from this account, that the countryfolk refused to go to the parish church, and chose rather to listen to outed ministers in the field. But this was not to be allowed, and their persecutors at last fell on the method of calling a roll of the parishioners' names every Sabbath and marking a fine of twenty shillings Scots to the name of each absenter. In this way very large debts were incurred by persons altogether unable to pay. Besides this, landlords were fined for their tenants' absences, tenants for their landlords', masters for their servants', servants for their masters', even though they themselves were perfectly regular in their attendance. And as the curates were allowed to fine with the sanction of any common soldier, it may be imagined that often the pretexts were neither very sufficient nor well proven.

When the fines could not be paid at once, bibles, clothes, and household utensils were seized upon, or a number of soldiers, proportionate to his wealth, were quartered on the offender. The coarse and drunken privates filled the houses with woe; snatched the bread from the children to feed their dogs; shocked the principles, scorned the scruples, and blasphemed the religion of their humble hosts; and when they had reduced them to destitution, sold the furniture, and burned down the roof-tree, which was consecrated to the peasants by the name of Home. For all this attention each of these soldiers received from his unwilling landlord a certain sum of money per day—three shillings sterling, according to "Naphtali." And frequently they were forced to pay quartering money for more men than were in reality "cessed" on them. At that time it was no strange thing to behold a strong man begging for money to pay his fines, and many others who were deep in arreas, or who had

[1] History of my Own Times, beginning 1660, by Bishop Gilbert Burnet, p. 158.

attracted attention in some other way, were forced to flee from their homes, and take refuge from arrest and imprisonment among the wild mosses of the uplands.[1]

One example in particular we may cite:—

John Nielson, the Laird of Corsack, a worthy man, was, unfortunately for himself, a Nonconformist. First he was fined in four hundred pounds Scots, and then through cessing he lost nineteen hundred and ninety-three pounds Scots. He was next obliged to leave his house and flee from place to place, during which wanderings he lost his horse. His wife and children were turned out of doors, and then his tenants were fined till they too were almost all ruined. As a final stroke, they drove away all his cattle to Glasgow and sold them.[2] Surely it was time that something were done to alleviate so much sorrow, to overthrow such tyranny.

About this time too there arrived in Galloway a person calling himself Captain Andrew Gray, and advising the people to revolt. He displayed some documents purporting to be from the northern Covenanters, and stating that they were prepared to join in any enterprise commenced by their southern brethren. The leader of the persecutors was Sir James Turner, an officer afterwards degraded for his share in the matter. "He was naturally fierce, but was mad when he was drunk, and that was very often," said Bishop Burnet. "He was a learned man, but had always been in armies, and knew no other rule but to obey orders. He told me he had no regard to any law, but acted, as he was commanded, in a military way."[3]

This was the state of matters, when an outrage was committed which gave spirit and determination to the oppressed countrymen, lit the flame of insubordination, and for the time at least recoiled on those who perpetrated it with redoubled force.

[1] Wodrow's Church History, book II, chap. i, sect. 1.
[2] Crookshank's Church History, 1751, 2nd edit., p. 202.
[3] Burnet, p. 348.

II

THE BEGINNING

I love no warres,
I love no jarres,
Nor strife's fire,
May discord cease,
Let's live in peace:
This I desire.

If it must be,
Warre we must see
(So fates conspire),
May we not feel
The force of steel:
This I desire.

T. Jackson, 1651.[1]

Upon Tuesday, November 13th, 1666, Corporal George Deanes and three other soldiers set upon an old man in the Clachan of Dalry, and demanded the payment of his fines. On the old man's refusing to pay, they forced a large party of his neighbours to go with them and thresh his corn. The field was a certain distance out of the clachan, and four persons, disguised as countrymen, who had been out on the moors all night, met this mournful drove of slaves, compelled by the four soldiers to work for the ruin of their friend. However, chilled to the bone by their night on the hills, and worn out by want of food, they proceeded to the village inn to refresh themselves. Suddenly some people rushed into the room where they were sitting, and told them that the soldiers were about to roast the old man, naked, on his own girdle. This was too much for them to stand, and they repaired immediately to the scene of this gross outrage, and at first merely requested that the captive should be released. On the refusal of the two soldiers who were in the front room, high words were given and taken on both sides, and the other two rushed forth from an adjoining chamber and made at the countrymen with drawn swords. One of the latter, John M'Lellan of Barskob, drew a pistol and shot the

[1] Fuller's Historie of the Holy Warre. 4th edit. 1651.

corporal in the body. The pieces of tobacco pipe with which it was loaded, to the number of ten at least, entered him, and he was so much disturbed that he never appears to have recovered, for we find long afterwards a petition to the Privy Council requesting a pension for him. The other soldiers then laid down their arms, the old man was rescued, and the rebellion was commenced.[1]

And now we must turn to Sir James Turner's memoirs of himself; for, strange to say, this extraordinary man was remarkably fond of literary composition, and wrote, besides the amusing account of his own adventures just mentioned, a large number of essays and short biographies, and a work on war, entitled "Pallas Armata." The following are some of the shorter pieces: *Magick, Friendship, Imprisonment, Anger, Revenge, Duells, Cruelty, A Defence of some of the Ceremonies of the English Liturgie, to wit—Bowing at the Name of Jesus, The frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer and Good Lord deliver us, Of the Doxologie, Of Surplesses, Rotchets, Cannonicall Coats,* etc. From what we know of his character we should expect *Anger* and *Cruelty* to be very full and instructive. But what earthly right he had to meddle with ecclesiastical subjects it is hard to see.

Upon the 12th of the month he had received some information concerning Gray's proceedings, but as it was excessively indefinite in its character, he paid no attention to it. On the evening of the 14th, Corporal Deanes was brought into Dumfries, who affirmed stoutly that he had been shot while refusing to sign the Covenant—a story rendered singularly unlikely by the after conduct of the rebels. Sir James instantly despatched orders to the cessed soldiers either to come to Dumfries, or meet him on the way to Dalry, and commanded the thirteen or fourteen men in the town with him to come at nine next morning to his lodging for supplies.

[1] Wodrow, vol. II, p. 17.

On the morning of Thursday the rebels arrived at Dumfries with 50 horse and 150 foot. Nielson of Corsack, and Gray, who commanded, with a considerable troop, entered the town, and surrounded Sir James Turner's lodging. Though it was between eight and nine o'clock, that worthy, being unwell, was still in bed, but rose at once and went to the window.

Nielson and some others cried—"You may have fair quarter." "I need no quarter," replied Sir James; "nor can I be a prisoner, seeing there is no war declared." On being told, however, that he must either be a prisoner, or die, he came down and went into the street in his nightshirt. Here Gray showed himself very desirous of killing him, but he was overruled by Corsack. However, he was taken away a prisoner, Captain Gray mounting him on his own horse, though, as Turner naïvely remarks, "there was a good reason for it, for he mounted himself on a farre better one of mine." A large coffer containing his clothes and money, together with all his papers, were taken away by the rebels. They robbed Master Chalmers, the Episcopalian minister of Dumfries, of his horses, drank the King's health at the market-cross, and then left Dumfries.[1]

III

THE MARCH OF THE REBELS

"Stay, passenger, take notice what thou reads,
At Edinburgh lie our bodies, here our heads:
Our right hands stood at Lanark, these we want,
Because with them we signed the Covenant."
Epitaph on a Tombstone at Hamilton.[2]

On Friday the 16th, Bailie Irvine of Dumfries came to the Council at Edinburgh, and gave information con-

[1] Sir J. Turner's Memoirs, pp. 148-150.
[2] A Cloud of Witnesses, p. 376.

cerning this "horrid rebellion." In the absence of Rothes, Sharpe presided—much to the wrath of some members; and as he imagined his own safety endangered, his measures were most energetic. Dalzell was ordered away to the west, the guards round the city were doubled, officers and soldiers were forced to take the oath of allegiance, and all lodgers were commanded to give in their names. Sharpe, surrounded with all these guards and precautions, trembled—trembled as he trembled when the avengers of blood drew him from his chariot on Magus Muir,—for he knew how he had sold his trust, how he had betrayed his charge, and he felt that against him must their chiefest hatred be directed, against him their direst thunderbolts be forged. But even in his fear the apostate Presbyterian was unrelenting, unpityingly harsh; he published in his manifesto no promise of pardon, no inducement to submission. He said, "If you submit not you must die," but never added, "If you submit you may live!"[1]

Meantime the insurgents proceeded on their way. At Carsphairn they were deserted by Captain Gray, who, doubtless in a fit of oblivion, neglected to leave behind him the coffer containing Sir James's money. Who he was is a mystery, unsolved by any historian; his papers were evidently forgeries—that, and his final flight, appear to indicate that he was an agent of the Royalists, for either the King or the Duke of York was heard to say—"That, if he might have his wish, he would have them all turn rebels and go to arms."[2]

Upon the 18th day of the month they left Carsphairn and marched onwards.

Turner was always lodged by his captors at a good inn, frequently at the best of which their halting-place could boast. Here many visits were paid to him by the ministers and officers of the insurgent force. In his description of these interviews he displays a vein of satiric severity, admitting any kindness that was done to him with some qualifying souvenir of former

[1] Wodrow, pp. 19, 20. [2] A Hind Let Loose, p. 123.

harshness, and gloating over any injury, mistake, or folly which it was his chance to suffer or to hear. He appears, notwithstanding all this, to have been on pretty good terms with his cruel "phanaticks," as the following extract sufficiently proves:—

"Most of the foot were lodged about the church or churchyard, and order given to ring bells next morning for a sermon to be preached by Mr. Welch. Maxwell of Morith, and Major M'Cullough invited me to heare 'that phanatick sermon' (for soe they merrilie called it). They said that preaching might prove an effectual meane to turne me, which they heartilie wished. I answered to them that I was under guards, and that if they intended to heare that sermon, it was probable I might likewise, for it was not like my guards wold goe to church and leave me alone at my lodgeings. Bot to what they said of my conversion, I said, it wold be hard to turne a Turner. Bot because I founde them in a merrie humour, I said, if I did not come to heare Mr. Welch preach, then they might fine me in fortie shillings Scots, which was duoble the suome of what I had exacted from the phanatics."[1] This took place at Ochiltree, on the 22nd day of the month. The following is recounted by this personage with malicious glee, and certainly, if authentic, it is a sad proof of how chaff is mixed with wheat, and how ignorant, almost impious, persons were engaged in this movement; nevertheless we give it, for we wish to present with impartiality all the alleged facts to the reader:—

"Towards the evening Mr. Robinsone and Mr. Crukshank gaue me a visite; I called for some ale purposelie to heare one of them blesse it. It fell Mr. Robinsone to seeke the blessing, who said one of the most bombastick graces that ever I heard in my life. He summoned God Allmightie very imperiouslie to be their secondarie (for that was his language). 'And if,' said he 'thou wilt not be our Secondarie, we will not fight for thee at all, for it is not our cause bot thy cause;

[1] Sir J. Turner, p. 163..

and if thou wilt not fight for our cause and thy oune cause, then we are not obliged to fight for it. They say,' said he, ' that Dukes, Earles and Lords are coming with the King's General against us, bot they shall be nothing bot a threshing to us.' This grace did more fullie satisfie me of the folly and injustice of their cause, than the ale did quench my thirst." [1]

Frequently the rebels made a halt near some road-side ale-house, or in some convenient park, where Colonel Wallace, who had now taken the command, would review the horse and foot, during which time Turner was sent either into the ale-house or round the shoulder of a hill, to prevent him from seeing the disorders which were likely to arise. He was, at last, on the 25th day of the month, between Douglas and Lanark, permitted to behold their evolutions. " I found their horse did consist of four hundreth and fortie and the foot of five hundreth and upwards. . . . The horsemen were armed for most part with suord and pistoll some onlie with suord. The foot with musket, pike, sith [scythe], forke, and suord; and some with suords great and long." He admired much the proficiency of their cavalry, and marvelled how they had attained to it in so short a time.[2]

At Douglas, which they had just left on the morning of this great wapinschaw, they were charged—awful picture of depravity!—with the theft of a silver spoon and a nightgown. Could it be expected that while the whole country swarmed with robbers of every description, such a rare opportunity for plunder should be lost by rogues—that among a thousand men, even though fighting for religion, there should not be one Achan in the camp? At Lanark a declaration was drawn up and signed by the chief rebels. In it occurs the following:—

" The just sense whereof "—the sufferings of the country—" made us choose, rather to betake ourselves to

[1] Turner, p. 198. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 167.

the fields for self-defence, than to stay at home, burdened daily with the calamities of others, and tortured with the fears of our own approaching misery." [1]

The whole body, too, swore the Covenant, to which ceremony the epitaph at the head of this chapter seems to refer.

A report that Dalzell was approaching drove them from Lanark to Bathgate, where, on the evening of Tuesday the 26th, the wearied army stopped. But at twelve o'clock the cry which served them for a trumpet of, "Horse! horse!" and "Mount the prisoner!" resounded through the night-shrouded town, and called the peasants from their well-earned rest to toil onwards in their march. The wind howled fiercely over the moorland; a close, thick, wetting rain descended. Chilled to the bone, worn out with long fatigue, sinking to the knees in mire, onward they marched to destruction. One by one the weary peasants fell off from their ranks to sleep, and die in the rain-soaked moor, or to seek some house by the wayside wherein to hide till daybreak. One by one at first, then in gradually increasing numbers, till at last, at every shelter that was seen, whole troops left the waning squadrons, and rushed to hide themselves from the ferocity of the tempest. To right and left nought could be descried but the broad expanse of the moor, and the figures of their fellow-rebels, seen dimly through the murky night, plodding onwards through the sinking moss. Those who kept together—a miserable few—often halted to rest themselves, and to allow their lagging comrades to overtake them. Then onward they went again, still hoping for assistance, reinforcement, and supplies; onward again, through the wind, and the rain, and the darkness—onward to their defeat at Pentland, and their scaffold at Edinburgh. It was calculated that they lost one half of their army on that disastrous night march.

[1] Wodrow, p. 29.

Next night they reached the village of Colinton, four miles from Edinburgh, where they halted for the last time.[1]

IV

RULLION GREEN

"From Covenanters with uplifted hands,
From remonstrators with associate bands,
Good Lord, deliver us."
Royalist Rhyme, Kirkton, p. 127.

Late on the fourth night of November, exactly twenty-four days before Rullion Green, Richard and George Chaplain, merchants in Haddington, beheld four men, clad like west country Whigamores, standing round some object on the ground. It was at the two-mile cross, and within that distance from their homes. At last, to their horror, they discovered that the recumbent figure was a livid corpse swathed in a blood-stained winding-sheet.[2] Many thought that this apparition was a portent of the deaths connected with the Pentland Rising.

On the morning of Thursday, the 28th of November, 1666, they left Colinton and marched to Rullion Green. There they arrived about sunset. The position was a strong one. On the summit of a bare heathery spur of the Pentlands are two hillocks, and between them lies a narrow band of flat marshy ground. On the highest of the two mounds—that nearest the Pentlands, and on the left hand of the main body—was the greater part of the cavalry, under Major Learmont; on the other Barskob and the Galloway gentlemen; and in the centre Colonel Wallace and the weak half-armed infantry. Their position was further strengthened by the depth of

[1] Turner, Wodrow, and *Church History*, by James Kirkton, an outed minister of the period.

[2] Kirkton, p. 244.

the valley below, and the deep chasm-like course of the Rullion Burn.

The sun, going down behind the Pentlands, cast golden lights and blue shadows on their snow-clad summits, slanted obliquely into the rich plain before them, bathing with rosy splendour the leafless, snow-sprinkled trees and fading gradually into shadow in the distance. To the south, too, they beheld a deep-shaded amphitheatre of heather and bracken; the course of the Esk, near Penicuik, winding about at the foot of its gorge; the broad, brown expanse of Maw moss; and, fading into blue indistinctness in the south, the wild heath-clad Peeblesshire hills. In sooth, that scene was fair, and many a yearning glance was cast over that peaceful evening scene from the spot where the rebels awaited their defeat; and when the fight was over, many a noble fellow lifted his head from the blood-stained heather to strive with darkening eyeballs to behold that landscape, over which, as o'er his life and his cause, the shadows of night and of gloom were falling and thickening.

It was while waiting on this spot that the fear-inspiring cry was raised, " The enemy!—Here comes the enemy! "

Unwilling to believe their own doom—for our insurgents still hoped for success in some negotiations for peace which had been carried on at Colinton—they called out,—" They are some other of our own."

" They are too blacke " (i.e. too numerous), " fie! fie! for ground to draw up on," cried Wallace, fully realising the want of space for his men, and proving that it was not till after this time that his forces were finally arranged.[1]

First of all the battle was commenced by fifty royalist horse sent obliquely across the hill to attack the left wing of the rebels. An equal number of Learmont's men met them, and, after a struggle, drove them back. The course of the Rullion Burn prevented almost

[1] Kirkton.

all pursuit, and Wallace, on perceiving it, despatched a body of foot to occupy both the burn and some ruined sheep walls on the farther side.

Dalzell changed his position and drew up his army at the foot of the hill, on the top of which were his foes. He then despatched a mingled body of infantry and cavalry to attack Wallace's outpost, but they also were driven back. A third charge produced a still more disastrous effect, for Dalzell had to check the pursuit of his men by a reinforcement.

These repeated checks bred a panic in the lieutenant-general's ranks, for several of his men flung down their arms. Urged by such fatal symptoms, and by the approaching night, he deployed his men and closed in overwhelming numbers on the centre and right flank of the insurgent army. In the increasing twilight the burning matches of the firelocks, shimmering on barrel, halbert, and cuirass, lent to the approaching army a picturesque effect, like a huge many-armed giant breathing flame into the darkness.

Placed on an overhanging hill, Welch and Semple cried aloud, "The God of Jacob! The God of Jacob!" and prayed with uplifted hands for victory.[1]

But still the royalist troops closed in.

Captain John Paton was observed by Dalzell, who determined to capture him with his own hands. Accordingly, he charged forward presenting his pistols. Paton fired, but the balls hopped off Dalzell's buff coat and fell into his boot. With the superstition peculiar to his age, the Nonconformist concluded that his adversary was rendered bullet-proof by enchantment, and pulling some small silver coins from his pocket, charged his pistol therewith. Dalzell, seeing this and supposing, it is likely, that Paton was putting in larger balls, hid behind his servant, who was killed.[2]

Meantime the outposts were forced, and the army of Wallace was enveloped in the embrace of a hideous boa-constrictor—tightening, closing, crushing every semb-

[1] Turner. [2] Kirkton, p. 244.

lance of life from the victim enclosed in his toils. The flanking parties of horse were forced in upon the centre, and though, as even Turner grants, they fought with desperation, a general flight was the result.

But when they fell there was none to sing their coronach or wail the death-wail over them. Those who sacrificed themselves for the peace, the liberty, and the religion of their fellow-countrymen, lay bleaching in the field of death for long, and when at last they were buried by charity, the peasants dug up their bodies, desecrated their graves, and cast them once more upon the open heath for the sorry value of their winding sheets!

Inscription on stone at Rullion Green:

Here
and near to
this place lyes the
reuerend Mr. John Crookshanks
and Mr. Andrew M'Cormock
ministers of the Gospel, and
about fifty other true coven-
anted Presbyterians who were
killed in this place in their own
innocent self-defence and de-
fence of the Covenanted
Work of Reformation by
Thomas Dalzel of Bins
Upon 28 November
1666. Rev. 12. 11. Erected
September 28, 1738.

Back of stone:

A Cloud of Witnesses ly here,
Who for Christ's Interest did appear,
For to restore true Liberty,
O'erturned then by tyranny;

And by proud Prelates who did Rage
Against the Lord's own heritage;
They sacrific'd were for the laws
Of Christ their King, his noble cause,
These heroes fought with great renown
By falling got the Martyr's crown.[1]

V

A RECORD OF BLOOD

"They cut his hands ere he was dead,
And after that struck off his head.
His blood under the altar cries,
For vengeance on Christ's enemies."
Epitaph on Tomb at Longcross of Clermont.[2]

Master Andrew Murray, an outed minister residing in the Potterrow, on the morning after the defeat, heard the sounds of cheering and march of many feet beneath his window. He gazed out. With colours flying, and with music sounding, Dalzell victorious entered Edinburgh. But his banners were dyed in blood, and a band of prisoners were marched within his ranks. The old man knew it all. That martial and triumphant strain was the death-knell of his friends and of their cause, the rust-hued spots upon the flags were the tokens of their courage and their death, and the prisoners were the miserable remnant spared from death in battle to die upon the scaffold. Poor old man! he had outlived all joy. Had he lived longer he would have seen increasing torment and increasing woe; he would have seen the clouds, then but gathering in the mist, cast a more than midnight darkness o'er his native hills, and have fallen a victim to those bloody persecutions which, later, sent their red memorials to the sea by many a burn. By a merciful Providence all this was

[1] Kirkton, p. 246.
[2] Cloud of Witnesses, p. 389. Edin. 1765.

spared to him—he fell beneath the first blow: and ere four days had passed since Rullion Green, the aged minister of God was gathered to his fathers.[1]

When Sharpe first heard of the rebellion, he applied to Sir Alexander Ramsay, the Provost, for soldiers to guard his house. Disliking their occupation, the soldiers gave him an ugly time of it. All the night through they kept up a continuous series of "alarms and incursions," cries of "Stand!" "Give fire!" etc., which forced the prelate to flee to the castle in the morning, hoping there to find the rest which was denied him at home.[2] Now, however, when all danger to himself was past, Sharpe came out in his true colours, and scant was the justice likely to be shown to the foes of Scotch Episcopacy when the Primate was by. The prisoner's were lodged in Haddo's Hole, a part of St. Giles's Cathedral, where, by the kindness of Bishop Wishart, to his credit be it spoken, they were amply supplied with food.[3]

Some people urged, in the council, that the promise of quarter which had been given on the field of battle should protect the lives of the miserable men. Sir John Gilmore, the greatest lawyer, gave no opinion—certainly a suggestive circumstance,—but Lord Lee declared that this would not interfere with their legal trial; so "to bloody executions they went."[4] To the number of thirty they were condemned and executed; while two of them, Hugh M'Kail, a young minister, and Nielson of Corsack, were tortured with the boots.

The goods of those who perished were confiscated, and their bodies were dismembered and distributed to different parts of the country; "the heads of Major M'Culloch and the two Gordons," it was resolved, says Kirkton, "should be pitched on the gate of Kirkcudbright; the two Hamiltons and Strong's head should be affixed at Hamilton, and Captain Arnot's sett on the Watter Gate at Edinburgh. The armes of all the ten,

[1] Kirkton, p. 247.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 254.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 247.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 247, 248.

because they hade with uplifted hands renewed the Covenant at Lanark, were sent to the people of that town to expiate that crime, by placing these armes on the top of the prison." [1] Among these was John Nielson, the Laird of Corsack, who saved Turner's life at Dumfries; in return for which service, Sir James attempted, though without success, to get the poor man reprieved. One of the condemned died of his wounds between the day of condemnation and the day of execution. "None of them," says Kirkton, "would save their life by taking the declaration and renouncing the Covenant, though it was offered to them. . . . But never men died in Scotland so much lamented by the people, not only spectators, but those in the country. When Knockbreck and his brother were turned over, they clasped each other in their armes, and so endured the pangs of death. When Humphray Colquhoun died, he spoke not like an ordinary citizen, but like a heavenly minister, relating his comfortable Christian experiences, and called for his Bible, and laid it on his wounded arm, and read John iii. 8, and spoke upon it to the admiration of all. But most of all, when Mr. M'Kail died, there was such a lamentation as was never known in Scotland before; not one dry cheek upon all the street, or in all the numberless windows in the mercate place." [2]

The following passage from this speech speaks for itself and its author:—

"Hereafter I will not talk with flesh and blood, nor think on the world's consolations. Farewell to all my friends, whose company hath been refreshful to me in my pilgrimage. I have done with the light of the sun and the moon; welcome eternal light, eternal life, everlasting love, everlasting praise, everlasting glory. Praise to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever! Bless the Lord, O my soul, that hath pardoned all my iniquities in the blood of His Son, and

[1] Kirkton, p. 248. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 249.

healed all my diseases. Bless Him, oh! all ye His angels, that excel in strength, ye ministers that do His pleasure. Bless the Lord, O my soul!" [1]

After having ascended the gallows-ladder he again broke forth in the following words of touching eloquence:

"And now I leave off to speak any more to creatures, and begin my intercourse with God, which shall never be broken off. Farewell father and mother, friends and relations! Farewell the world and all delights! Farewell meat and drink! Farewell sun, moon, and stars! Welcome God and Father! Welcome sweet Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant! Welcome blessed Spirit of grace, and God of all consolation! Welcome glory! Welcome eternal life! Welcome Death!" [2]

At Glasgow, too, where some were executed, they caused the soldiers to beat the drums and blow the trumpets on their closing ears. Hideous refinement of revenge! Even the last words which drop from the lips of a dying man—words surely the most sincere and the most unbiassed which mortal mouth can utter—even these were looked upon as poisoned and as poisonous. "Drown their last accents," was the cry, "lest they should lead the crowd to take their part, or at least to mourn their doom!" [3] But, after all, perhaps it was more merciful than one would think—unintentionally so, of course; perhaps the storm of harsh and fiercely jubilant noises, the clanging of trumpets, the rattling of drums, and the hootings and jeerings of an unfeeling mob, which were the last they heard on earth, might, when the mortal fight was over, when the river of death was passed, add tenfold sweetness to the hymning of the angels, tenfold peacefulness to the shores which they had reached.

[1] Naphtali, Glasg. 1721, p. 205. [2] Wodrow, p. 59.
[3] Kirkton, p. 246.

Not content with the cruelty of these executions, some even of the peasantry, though these were confined to the shire of Mid-Lothian, pursued, captured, plundered, and murdered the miserable fugitives who fell in their way. One strange story have we of these times of blood and persecution: Kirkton, the historian, and popular tradition tell us alike, of a flame which often would arise from the grave, in a moss near Carnwath, of some of those poor rebels; of how it crept along the ground; of how it covered the house of their murderer; and of how it scared him with its lurid glare.

Hear Daniel Defoe: [1]

"If the poor people were by these insupportable violences made desperate, and driven to all the extremities of a wild despair, who can justly reflect on them when they read in the word of God 'That oppression makes a wise man mad'? And therefore were there no other original of the insurrection known by the name of the Rising of Pentland, it was nothing but what the intolerable oppressions of those times might have justified to all the world, nature having dictated to all people a right of defence when illegally and arbitrarily attacked in a manner not justifiable either by the laws of nature, the laws of God, or the laws of the country."

Bear this remonstrance of Defoe's in mind, and though it is the fashion of the day to jeer and to mock, to execrate and to contemn the noble band of Covenanters, though the bitter laugh at their old-world religious views, the curl of the lip at their merits, and the chilling silence on their bravery and their determination, are but too rife through all society; be charitable to what was evil, and honest to what was good about the Pentland insurgents, who fought for life and liberty, for country and religion, on the 28th of November, 1666, now just two hundred years ago.

Edinburgh, 28th Nov. 1866.

[1] Defoe's Hist. of the Church.

COLLEGE PAPERS

These articles were originally printed:

I. *Edinburgh University Magazine*, January 1871.
II. *Ibid.*, February 1871.
III. *Ibid.*, March 1871.
IV. *Ibid.*, February 1871.
V. *Ibid.*, April 1871

For the history of the short-lived periodical to which these papers were contributed, see the Author's essay, "A College Magazine," in *Memories and Portraits* (vol. xxix. of this edition). A sixth paper contributed to the same publication, "An Old Scots Gardener," is omitted in this place, having been reprinted with corrections by the Author himself in *Memories and Portraits*.

COLLEGE PAPERS

I

EDINBURGH STUDENTS IN 1824

ON the 2nd of January, 1824, was issued the prospectus of the *Lapsus Linguæ; or, the College Tatler;* and on the 7th the first number appeared. On Friday the 2nd of April "*Mr. Tatler* became speechless." Its history was not all one success; for the editor (who applies to himself the words of Iago, "I am nothing if I am not critical") overstepped the bounds of caution, and found himself seriously embroiled with the powers that were. There appeared in No. XVI. a most bitter satire upon Sir John Leslie, in which he was compared to Falstaff, charged with puffing himself, and very prettily censured for publishing only the first volume of a class-book, and making all purchasers pay for both. Sir John Leslie took up the matter angrily, visited Carfrae the publisher, and threatened him with an action, till he was forced to turn the hapless *Lapsus* out of doors. The maltreated periodical found shelter in the shop of Huie, Infirmary Street; and No. XVII. was duly issued from the new office. No. XVII. beheld *Mr. Tatler's* humiliation, in which, with fulsome apology and not very credible assurances of respect and admiration, he disclaims the article in question, and advertises a new issue of No. XVI. with all objectionable matter omitted. This, with pleasing euphemism, he terms in a later advertisement, "a new and improved edition." This was the only remarkable

adventure of *Mr. Tatler's* brief existence; unless we consider as such a silly Chaldee manuscript in imitation of *Blackwood,* and a letter of reproof from a divinity student on the impiety of the same dull effusion. He laments the near approach of his end in pathetic terms. "How shall we summon up sufficient courage," says he, "to look for the last time on our beloved little devil and his inestimable proof-sheet? How shall we be able to pass No. 14 Infirmary Street and feel that all its attractions are over? How shall we bid farewell for ever to that excellent man, with the long great-coat, wooden leg, and wooden board, who acts as our representative at the gate of *Alma Mater?*" But alas! he had no choice: *Mr. Tatler,* whose career, he says himself, had been successful, passed peacefully away, and has ever since dumbly implored "the bringing home of bell and burial."

Alter et idem. A very different affair was the *Lapsus Linguæ* from the *Edinburgh University Magazine.* The two prospectuses alone, laid side by side, would indicate the march of luxury and the repeal of the paper duty. The penny bi-weekly broadside of session 1823-4 was almost wholly dedicated to Momus. Epigrams, pointless letters, amorous verses, and University grievances are the continual burthen of the song. But *Mr. Tatler* was not without a vein of hearty humour; and his pages afford what is much better: to wit, a good picture of student life as it then was. The students of those polite days insisted on retaining their hats in the class-room. There was a cab-stance in front of the College; and "Carriage Entrance" was posted above the main arch, on what the writer pleases to call "coarse, unclassic boards." The benches of the Speculative then, as now, were red; but all other Societies (the Dialectic is the only survivor) met downstairs, in some rooms of which it is pointedly said that "nothing else could conveniently be made of them." However horrible these dungeons may have been, it is certain that they were paid for, and that far too heavily for the taste of ses-

sion 1823-4, which found enough calls upon its purse for porter and toasted cheese at Ambrose's, or cranberry tarts and ginger-wine at Doull's. Duelling was still a possibility; so much so that when two medicals fell to fisticuffs in Adam Square, it was seriously hinted that single combat would be the result. Last and most wonderful of all, Gall and Spurzheim were in every one's mouth; and the Law student, after having exhausted Byron's poetry and Scott's novels, informed the ladies of his belief in phrenology. In the present day he would dilate on "*Red as a rose is she*," and then mention that he attends Old Greyfriars', as a tacit claim to intellectual superiority. I do not know that the advance is much.

But *Mr. Tatler's* best performances were three short papers in which he hit off pretty smartly the idiosyncrasies of the "*Divinity*," the "*Medical*," and the "*Law*" of session 1823-4. The fact that there was no notice of the "*Arts*" seems to suggest that they stood in the same intermediate position as they do now— the epitome of student-kind. *Mr. Tatler's* satire is, on the whole, good-humoured, and has not grown superannuated in *all* its limbs. His descriptions may limp at some points, but there are certain broad traits that apply equally well to session 1870-71. He shows us the *Divinity* of the period—tall, pale, and slender—his collar greasy, and his coat bare about the seams—"his white neckcloth serving four days, and regularly turned the third,"—"the rim of his hat deficient in wool,"—and "a weighty volume of theology under his arm." He was the man to buy cheap "a snuff-box, or a dozen of pencils, or a six-bladed knife, or a quarter of a hundred quills," at any of the public sale-rooms. He was noted for cheap purchases, and for exceeding the legal tender in halfpence. He haunted "the darkest and remotest corner of the Theatre Gallery." He was to be seen issuing from "aërial lodging-houses." Withal, says mine author, "there were many good points about him: he paid his landlady's bill, read his Bible, went

twice to church on Sunday, seldom swore, was not often tipsy, and bought the *Lapsus Linguæ.*"

The *Medical,* again, "wore a white greatcoat, and consequently talked loud"—(there is something very delicious in that *consequently*). He wore his hat on one side. He was active, volatile, and went to the top of Arthur's Seat on the Sunday forenoon. He was as quiet in a debating society as he was loud in the streets. He was reckless and imprudent: yesterday he insisted on your sharing a bottle of claret with him (and claret was claret then, before the cheap-and-nasty treaty), and to-morrow he asks you for the loan of a penny to buy the last number of the *Lapsus.*

The student of *Law,* again, was a learned man. "He had turned over the leaves of Justinian's *Institutes,* and knew that they were written in Latin. He was well acquainted with the title-page of *Blackstone's Commentaries,* and *argal* (as the gravedigger in *Hamlet* says) he was not a person to be laughed at." He attended the Parliament House in the character of a critic, and could give you stale sneers at all the celebrated speakers. He was the terror of essayists at the Speculative or the Forensic. In social qualities he seems to have stood unrivalled. Even in the police-office we find him shining with undiminished lustre. "If a *Charlie* should find him rather noisy at an untimely hour, and venture to take him into custody, he appears next morning like a Daniel come to judgment. He opens his mouth to speak, and the divine precepts of unchanging justice and Scots Law flow from his tongue. The magistrate listens in amazement, and fines him only a couple of guineas.

Such then were our predecessors and their College Magazine. Barclay, Ambrose, Young Amos, and Fergusson were to them what the Café, the Rainbow, and Rutherford's are to us. An hour's reading in these old pages absolutely confuses us, there is so much that is similar and so much that is different; the follies and amusements are so like our own, and the manner of

frolicking and enjoying are so changed, that one pauses and looks about him in philosophic judgment. The muddy quadrangle is thick with living students; but in our eyes it swarms also with the phantasmal white greatcoats and tilted hats of 1824. Two races meet: races alike and diverse. Two performances are played before our eyes; but the change seems merely of impersonators, of scenery, of costume. Plot and passion are the same. It is the fall of the spun shilling whether seventy-one or twenty-four has the best of it.

In a future number we hope to give a glance at the individualities of the present, and see whether the cast shall be head or tail—whether we or the readers of the *Lapsus* stand higher in the balance.

II

THE MODERN STUDENT CONSIDERED GENERALLY

WE have now reached the difficult portion of our task. *Mr. Tatler,* for all that we care, may have been as virulent as he liked about the students of a former day; but for the iron to touch our sacred selves, for a brother of the Guild to betray its most privy infirmities, let such a Judas look to himself as he passes on his way to the Scots Law or the Diagnostic, below the solitary lamp at the corner of the dark quadrangle. We confess that this idea alarms us. We enter a protest. We bind ourselves over verbally to keep the peace. We hope, moreover, that having thus made you secret to our misgivings, you will excuse us if we be dull, and set that down to caution which you might before have charged to the account of stupidity.

The natural tendency of civilisation is to obliterate those distinctions which are the best salt of life. All the fine old professional flavour in language has evaporated. Your very gravedigger has forgotten his avocation in his electorship, and would quibble on the Franchise over Ophelia's grave, instead of more appropriately discussing the duration of bodies under ground. From this tendency, from this gradual attrition of life, in which everything pointed and characteristic is being rubbed down, till the whole world begins to slip between our fingers in smooth undistinguishable sands, from this, we say, it follows that we must not attempt to join *Mr. Tatler* in his simple division of students into *Law, Divinity,* and *Medical.* Nowadays the faculties may

shake hands over their follies; and, like Mrs. Frail and Mrs. Foresight (in *Love for Love*), they may stand in the doors of opposite class-rooms, crying: "Sister, Sister—Sister everyway!" A few restrictions, indeed, remain to influence the followers of individual branches of study. The *Divinity*, for example, must be an avowed believer; and as this, in the present day, is unhappily considered by many as a confession of weakness, he is fain to choose one of two ways of gilding the distasteful orthodox bolus. Some swallow it in a thin jelly of metaphysics; for it is even a credit to believe in God on the evidence of some crack-jaw philosopher, although it is a decided slur to believe in Him on His own authority. Others again (and this we think the worst method), finding German grammar a somewhat dry morsel, run their own little heresy as a proof of independence; and deny one of the cardinal doctrines that they may hold the others without being laughed at.

Besides, however, such influences as these, there is little more distinction between the faculties than the traditionary ideal, handed down through a long sequence of students, and getting rounder and more featureless at each successive session. The plague of uniformity has descended on the College. Students (and indeed all sorts and conditions of men) now require their faculty and character hung round their neck on a placard, like the scenes in Shakespeare's theatre. And in the midst of all this weary sameness, not the least common feature is the gravity of every face. No more does the merry medical run eagerly in the clear winter morning up the rugged sides of Arthur's Seat, and hear the church bells begin and thicken and die away below him among the gathered smoke of the city. He will not break Sunday to so little purpose. He no longer finds pleasure in the mere output of his surplus energy. He husbands his strength, and lays out walks, and reading, and amusement with deep consideration, so that he may get as much work and pleasure out of his body

as he can, and waste none of his energy on mere impulse, or such flat enjoyment as an excursion in the country.

See the quadrangle in the interregnum of classes, in those two or three minutes when it is full of passing students, and we think you will admit that, if we have not made it "an habitation of dragons," we have at least transformed it into "a court for owls." Solemnity broods heavily over the enclosure; and wherever you seek it, you will find a dearth of merriment, an absence of real youthful enjoyment. You might as well try

> "To move wild laughter in the throat of death,"

as to excite any healthy stir among the bulk of this staid company.

The studious congregate about the doors of the different classes, debating the matter of the lecture, or comparing note-books. A reserved rivalry sunders them. Here are some deep in Greek particles: there, others are already inhabitants of that land

> "Where entity and quiddity,
> Like ghosts of defunct bodies fly—
> Where Truth in person does appear
> Like words congealed in northern air."

But none of them seem to find any relish for their studies—no pedantic love of this subject or that lights up their eyes—science and learning are only means for a livelihood, which they have considerably embraced and which they solemnly pursue. "Labour's pale priests," their lips seem incapable of laughter, except in the way of polite recognition of professorial wit. The stains of ink are chronic on their meagre fingers. They walk like Saul among the asses.

The dandies are not less subdued. In 1824 there was a noisy dapper dandyism abroad. Vulgar, as we should now think, but yet genial—a matter of white greatcoats and loud voices—strangely different from the stately frippery that is rife at present. These men are out

of their element in the quadrangle. Even the small remains of boisterous humour, which still cling to any collection of young men, jar painfully on their morbid sensibilities; and they beat a hasty retreat to resume their perfunctory march along Princes Street. Flirtation is to them a great social duty, a painful obligation, which they perform on every occasion in the same chill official manner, and with the same commonplace advances, the same dogged observance of traditional behaviour. The shape of their raiment is a burthen almost greater than they can bear, and they halt in their walk to preserve the due adjustment of their trouser-knees, till one would fancy he had mixed in a procession of Jacobs. We speak, of course, for ourselves; but we would as soon associate with a herd of sprightly apes as with these gloomy modern beaux. Alas, that our Mirabels, our Valentines, even our Brummels, should have left their mantles upon nothing more amusing!

Nor are the fast men less constrained. Solemnity, even in dissipation, is the order of the day; and they go to the devil with a perverse seriousness, a systematic rationalism of wickedness that would have surprised the simpler sinners of old. Some of these men whom we see gravely conversing on the steps have but a slender acquaintance with each other. Their intercourse consists principally of mutual bulletins of depravity; and, week after week, as they meet they reckon up their items of transgression, and give an abstract of their downward progress for approval and encouragement. These folk form a freemasonry of their own. An oath is the shibboleth of their sinister fellowship. Once they hear a man swear, it is wonderful how their tongues loosen and their bashful spirits take enlargement, under the consciousness of brotherhood. There is no folly, no pardoning warmth of temper about them; they are as steady-going and systematic in their own way as the studious in theirs.

Not that we are without merry men. No. We shall not be ungrateful to those whose grimaces, whose ironi-

cal laughter, whose active feet in the *College Anthem* have beguiled so many weary hours and added a pleasant variety to the strain of close attention. But even these are too evidently professional in their antics. They go about cogitating puns and inventing tricks. It is their vocation, Hal. They are the gratuitous jesters of the class-room; and, like the clown when he leaves the stage, their merriment too often sinks as the bell rings the hour of liberty, and they pass forth by the Post-Office, grave and sedate, and meditating fresh gambols for the morrow.

This is the impression left on the mind of any observing student by too many of his fellows. They seem all frigid old men; and one pauses to think how such an unnatural state of matters is produced. We feel inclined to blame for it the unfortunate absence of *University feeling* which is so marked a characteristic of our Edinburgh students. Academical interests are so few and far between—students, as students, have so little in common, except a peevish rivalry—there is such an entire want of broad college sympathies and ordinary college friendships, that we fancy that no University in the kingdom is in so poor a plight. Our system is full of anomalies. A, who cut B whilst he was a shabby student, curries sedulously up to him and cudgels his memory for anecdotes about him when he becomes the great so-and-so. Let there be an end of this shy, proud reserve on the one hand, and this shuddering fine-ladyism on the other; and we think we shall find both ourselves and the College bettered. Let it be a sufficient reason for intercourse that two men sit together on the same benches. Let the great A be held excused for nodding to the shabby B in Princes Street, if he can say, "That fellow is a student." Once this could be brought about, we think you would find the whole heart of the University beat faster. We think you would find a fusion among the students, a growth of common feelings, an increasing sympathy between class and class, whose influence (in such a heterogeneous

company as ours) might be of incalculable value in all branches of politics and social progress. It would do more than this. If we could find some method of making the University a real mother to her sons—something beyond a building full of class-rooms, a Senatus and a lottery of somewhat shabby prizes—we should strike a death-blow at the constrained and unnatural attitude of our Society. At present we are not a united body, but a loose gathering of individuals, whose inherent attraction is allowed to condense them into little knots and coteries. Our last snowball riot read us a plain lesson on our condition. There was no party spirit—no unity of interests. A few, who were mischievously inclined, marched off to the College of Surgeons in a pretentious file; but even before they reached their destination the feeble inspiration had died out in many, and their numbers were sadly thinned. Some followed strange gods in the direction of Drummond Street, and others slunk back to meek goodboyism at the feet of the Professors. The same is visible in better things. As you send a man to an English University that he may have his prejudices rubbed off, you might send him to Edinburgh that he may have them ingrained—rendered indelible—fostered by sympathy into living principles of his spirit. And the reason of it is quite plain. From this absence of University feeling it comes that a man's friendships are always the direct and immediate results of these very prejudices. A common weakness is the best master of ceremonies in our quadrangle: a mutual vice is the readiest introduction. The studious associate with the studious alone—the dandies with the dandies. There is nothing to force them to rub shoulders with the others; and so they grow day by day more wedded to their own original opinions and affections. They see through the same spectacles continually. All broad sentiments, all real catholic humanity expires; and the mind gets gradually stiffened into one position—becomes so habituated to a contracted atmosphere, that

it shudders and withers under the least draught of the free air that circulates in the general field of mankind.

Specialism in Society, then, is, we think, one cause of our present state. Specialism in study is another. We doubt whether this has ever been a good thing since the world began; but we are sure it is much worse now than it was. Formerly, when a man became a specialist, it was out of affection for his subject. With a somewhat grand devotion he left all the world of Science to follow his true love; and he contrived to find that strange pedantic interest which inspired the man who

> "Settled *Hotï's* business—let it be—
> Properly based *Oun*—
> Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De,*
> Dead from the waist down."

Nowadays it is quite different. Our pedantry wants even the saving clause of Enthusiasm. The election is now matter of necessity and not of choice. Knowledge is now too broad a field for your Jack-of-all-Trades; and, from beautifully utilitarian reasons, he makes his choice, draws his pen through a dozen branches of study, and behold—John the Specialist. That this is the way to be wealthy we shall not deny; but we hold that it is *not* the way to be healthy or wise. The whole mind becomes narrowed and circumscribed to one "punctual spot" of knowledge. A rank, unhealthy soil breeds a harvest of prejudices. Feeling himself above others in his one little branch—in the classification of toadstools, or Carthaginian history—he waxes great in his own eyes and looks down on others. Having all his sympathies educated in one way, they die out in every other; and he is apt to remain a peevish, narrow, and intolerant bigot. Dilettante is now a term of reproach; but there is a certain form of dilettantism to which no one can object. It is this that we want among our students. We wish them to abandon no subject until they have seen and felt its merit—to act under a general interest in all

branches of knowledge, not a commercial eagerness to excel in one.

In both these directions our sympathies are constipated. We are apostles of our own caste and our own subject of study, instead of being, as we should, true men and *loving* students. Of course both of these could be corrected by the students themselves; but this is nothing to the purpose; it is more important to ask whether the Senatus or the body of alumni could do nothing towards the growth of better feeling and wider sentiments. Perhaps in another paper we may say something upon this head.

One other word, however, before we have done. What shall we be when we grow really old? Of yore, a man was thought to lay on restrictions and acquire new dead-weight of mournful experience with every year, till he looked back on his youth as the very summer of impulse and freedom. We please ourselves with thinking that it cannot be so with us. We would fain hope that, as we have begun in one way, we may end in another; and that when we *are* in fact the octogenarians that we *seem* at present, there shall be no merrier men on earth. It is pleasant to picture us, sunning ourselves in Princes Street of a morning, or chirping over our evening cups, with all the merriment that we wanted in youth.

III

DEBATING SOCIETIES

A DEBATING society is at first somewhat of a disappointment. You do not often find the youthful Demosthenes chewing his pebbles in the same room with you; or, even if you do, you will probably think the performance little to be admired. As a general rule, the members speak shamefully ill. The subjects of debate are heavy; and so are the fines. The Ballot Question—oldest of dialectic nightmares—is often found astride of a somnolent sederunt. The Greeks and Romans, too, are reserved as sort of *general-utility* men, to do all the dirty work of illustration; and they fill as many functions as the famous waterfall scene at the *Princess's*, which I found doing duty on one evening as a gorge in Peru, a haunt of German robbers, and a peaceful vale in the Scottish borders. There is a sad absence of striking argument or real lively discussion. Indeed, you feel a growing contempt for your fellow-members; and it is not until you rise yourself to hawk and hesitate and sit shamefully down again, amid eleemosynary applause, that you began to find your level and value others rightly. Even then, even when failure has damped your critical ardour, you will see many things to be laughed at in the deportment of your rivals.

Most laughable, perhaps, are your indefatigable strivers after eloquence. They are of those who "pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope," and who, since they expect that "the deficiencies of last sentence will be supplied by the next," have been recommended by Dr. Samuel Johnson to "attend to the His-

tory of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia." They are characterised by a hectic hopefulness. Nothing damps them. They rise from the ruins of one abortive sentence, to launch forth into another with unabated vigour. They have all the manner of an orator. From the tone of their voice, you would expect a splendid period—and lo! a string of broken-backed, disjointed clauses, eked out with stammerings and throat-clearings. They possess the art (learned from the pulpit) of rounding an uneuphonious sentence by dwelling on a single syllable—of striking a balance in a top-heavy period by lengthening out a word into a melancholy quaver. Withal, they never cease to hope. Even at last, even when they have exhausted all their ideas, even after the would-be peroration has finally refused to perorate, they remain upon their feet with their mouths open, waiting for some further inspiration, like Chaucer's widow's son in the dung-hole, after

"His throat was kit unto the nekké bone,"

in vain expectation of that seed that was to be laid upon his tongue, and give him renewed and clearer utterance.

These men may have something to say, if they could only say it—indeed they generally have; but the next class are people who, having nothing to say, are cursed with a facility and an unhappy command of words, that makes them the prime nuisances of the society they affect. They try to cover their absence of matter by an unwholesome vitality of delivery. They look triumphantly round the room, as if courting applause, after a torrent of diluted truism. They talk in a circle, harping on the same dull round of argument, and returning again and again to the same remark with the same sprightliness, the same irritating appearance of novelty.

After this set, any one is tolerable; so we shall merely hint at a few other varieties. There is your man who

is pre-eminently conscientious, whose face beams with sincerity as he opens on the negative, and who votes on the affirmative at the end, looking round the room with an air of chastened pride. There is also the irrelevant speaker, who rises, emits a joke or two, and then sits down again, without ever attempting to tackle the subject of debate. Again, we have men who ride pick-a-back on their family reputation, or, if their family have none, identify themselves with some well-known statesman, use his opinions, and lend him their patronage on all occasions. This is a dangerous plan, and serves oftener, I am afraid, to point a difference than to adorn a speech.

But alas! a striking failure may be reached without tempting Providence by any of these ambitious tricks. Our own stature will be found high enough for shame. The success of three simple sentences lures us into a fatal parenthesis in the fourth, from whose shut brackets we may never disentangle the thread of our discourse. A momentary flush tempts us into a quotation; and we may be left helpless in the middle of one of hope's couplets, a white film gathering before our eyes, and our kind friends charitably trying to cover our disgrace by a feeble round of applause. *Amis lecteurs,* this is a painful topic. It is possible that we too, we, the " potent, grave, and reverend " editor, may have suffered these things, and drunk as deep as any of the cup of shameful failure. Let us dwell no longer on so delicate a subject.

In spite, however, of these disagreeables, I should recommend any student to suffer them with Spartan courage, as the benefits he receives should repay him an hundredfold for them all. The life of the debating society is a handy antidote to the life of the class-room and quadrangle. Nothing could be conceived more excellent as a weapon against many of those *peccant humours* that we have been railing against in the Jeremiad of our last *College Paper*—particularly in the field of intellect. It is a sad sight to see our heather-

scented students, our boys of seventeen, coming up to College with determined views—*roués* in speculation —having gauged the vanity of philosophy or learned to shun it as the middleman of heresy—a company of determined deliberate opinionists, not to be moved by all the sleights of logic. What have such men to do with study? If their minds are made up irrevocably, why burn the "studious lamp" in search of further confirmation? Every set opinion I hear a student deliver I feel a certain lowering of my regard. He who studies, he who is yet employed in groping for his premises, should keep his mind fluent and sensitive, keen to mark flaws, and willing to surrender untenable positions. He should keep himself teachable, or cease the expensive farce of being taught. It is to further this docile spirit that we desire to press the claims of debating societies. It is as a means of melting down this museum of premature petrifactions into living and impressionable soul that we insist on their utility. If we could once prevail on our students to feel no shame in avowing an uncertain attitude towards any subject, if we could teach them that it was unnecessary for every lad to have his *opinionette* on every topic, we should have gone a far way towards bracing the intellectual tone of the coming race of thinkers; and that it is which debating societies are so well fitted to perform.

We there meet people of every shade of opinion, and make friends with them. We are taught to rail against a man the whole session through, and then hob-a-nob with him at the concluding entertainment. We find men of talent far exceeding our own, whose conclusions are widely different from ours; and we are thus taught to distrust ourselves. But the best means of all towards catholicity is that wholesome rule which some folk are most inclined to condemn—I mean the law of *obliged speeches*. Your senior member commands; and you must take the affirmative or the negative, just as suits his best convenience. This tends to the most perfect

liberality. It is no good hearing the arguments of an opponent, for in good verity you rarely follow them; and even if you do take the trouble to listen, it is merely in a captious search for weaknesses. This is proved, I fear, in every debate; when you hear each speaker arguing out his own prepared *spécialité* (he never intended speaking, of course, until some remarks of, etc.), arguing out, I say, his own *coached-up* subject without the least attention to what has gone before, as utterly at sea about the drift of his adversary's speech as Panurge when he argued with Thaumaste, and merely linking his own prelection to the last by a few flippant criticisms. Now, as the rule stands, you are saddled with the side you disapprove, and so you are forced, by regard for your own fame, to argue out, to feel with, to elaborate completely, the case as it stands against yourself; and what a fund of wisdom do you not turn up in this idle digging of the vineyard! How many new difficulties take form before your eyes! how many superannuated arguments cripple finally into limbo, under the glance of your enforced eclecticism!

Nor is this the only merit of Debating Societies. They tend also to foster taste, and to promote friendship between University men. This last, as we have had occasion before to say, is the great requirement of our student life; and it will therefore be no waste of time if we devote a paragraph to this subject in its connection with Debating Societies. At present they partake too much of the nature of a *clique*. Friends propose friends, and mutual friends second them, until the society degenerates into a sort of family party. You may confirm old acquaintances, but you can rarely make new ones. You find yourself in the atmosphere of your own daily intercourse. Now, this is an unfortunate circumstance, which it seems to me might readily be rectified. Our principal has shown himself so friendly towards all college improvements that I cherish the hope of seeing shortly realised a certain suggestion, which is not a new one with me, and which

must often have been proposed and canvassed heretofore —I mean, a real *University Debating Society,* patronised by the Senatus, presided over by the Professors, to which every one might gain ready admittance on sight of his matriculation ticket, where it would be a favour and not a necessity to speak, and where the obscure student might have another object for attendance besides the mere desire to save his fines: to wit, the chance of drawing on himself the favourable consideration of his teachers. This would be merely following in the good tendency, which has been so noticeable during all this session, to increase and multiply student societies and clubs of every sort. Nor would it be a matter of much difficulty. The united societies would form a nucleus: one of the class-rooms at first, and perhaps afterwards the great hall above the library, might be the place of meeting. There would be no want of attendance or enthusiasm, I am sure; for it is a very different thing to speak under the bushel of a private club on the one hand, and, on the other, in a public place, where a happy period or a subtle argument may do the speaker permanent service in after life. Such a club might end, perhaps, by rivalling the " Union " at Cambridge or the " Union " at Oxford.

IV

THE PHILOSOPHY OF UMBRELLAS[1]

IT is wonderful to think what a turn has been given to our whole Society by the fact that we live under the sign of Aquarius—that our climate is essentially wet. A mere arbitrary distinction, like the walking-swords of yore, might have remained the symbol of foresight and respectability, had not the raw mists and dropping showers of our island pointed the inclination of Society to another exponent of those virtues. A ribbon of the Legion of Honour or a string of medals may prove a person's courage; a title may prove his birth; a professorial chair his study and acquirement; but it is the habitual carriage of the umbrella that is the stamp of Respectability. The umbrella has become the acknowledged index of social position.

Robinson Crusoe presents us with a touching instance of the hankering after them inherent in the civilised and educated mind. To the superficial, the hot suns of Juan Fernandez may sufficiently account for his quaint choice of a luxury; but surely one who had borne the hard labour of a seaman under the tropics for all these years could have supported an excursion after goats or a peaceful *constitutional* arm-in-arm with the nude Friday. No, it was not this: the memory of a vanished respectability called for some outward manifestation, and the result was—an umbrella. A pious castaway might have rigged up a belfry and solaced his Sunday

[1] "This paper was written in collaboration with James Walter Ferrier, and if reprinted this is to be stated, though his principal collaboration was to lie back in an easy-chair and laugh."—[R. L. S., *Oct. 25, 1894.*]

mornings with the mimicy of church bells; but Crusoe was rather a moralist than a pietist, and his leaf-umbrella is as fine an example of the civilised mind striving to express itself under adverse circumstances as we have ever met with.

It is not for nothing, either, that the umbrella has become the very foremost badge of modern civilisation —the Urim and Thummim of respectability. Its pregnant symbolism has taken its rise in the most natural manner. Consider, for a moment, when umbrellas were first introduced into this country, what manner of men would use them, and what class would adhere to the useless but ornamental cane. The first, without doubt, would be the hypochondriacal, out of solicitude for their health, or the frugal, out of care for their raiment; the second, it is equally plain, would include the fop, the fool, and the Bobadil. Anyone acquainted with the growth of Society, and knowing out of what small seeds of cause are produced great revolutions and wholly new conditions of intercourse, sees from this simple thought how the carriage of an umbrella came to indicate frugality, judicious regard for bodily welfare, and scorn for mere outward adornment, and, in one word, all those homely and solid virtues implied in the term RESPECTABILITY. Not that the umbrella's costliness has nothing to do with its great influence. Its possession, besides symbolising (as we have already indicated) the change from wild Esau to plain Jacob dwelling in tents, implies a certain comfortable provision of fortune. It is not every one that can expose twenty-six shillings' worth of property to so many chances of loss and theft. So strongly do we feel on this point, indeed, that we are almost inclined to consider all who possess really well-conditioned umbrellas as worthy of the Franchise. They have a qualification standing in their lobbies; they carry a sufficient stake in the common-weal below their arm. One who bears with him an umbrella—such a complicated structure of whalebone, of silk, and of cane, that it becomes a very microcosm of modern in-

dustry—is necessarily a man of peace. A half-crown cane may be applied to an offender's head on a very moderate provocation; but a six-and-twenty shilling silk is a possession too precious to be adventured in the shock of war.

These are but a few glances at how umbrellas (in the general) came to their present high estate. But the true Umbrella-Philosopher meets with far stranger applications as he goes about the streets.

Umbrellas, like faces, acquire a certain sympathy with the individual who carries them: indeed, they are far more capable of betraying his trust; for whereas a face is given to us so far ready-made and all our power over it is in frowning, and laughing, and grimacing, during the first three or four decades of life, each umbrella is selected from a whole shopful, as being most consonant to the purchaser's disposition. An undoubted power of diagnosis rests with the practised Umbrella-Philosopher. O you who lisp and amble, and change the fashion of your countenances—you who conceal all these, how little do you think that you left a proof of your weakness in our umbrella-stand—that even now, as you shake out the folds to meet the thickening snow, we read in its ivory handle the outward and visible sign of your snobbery, or from the exposed gingham of its cover detect, through coat and waistcoat, the hidden hypocrisy of the *dickey!* But alas! even the umbrella is no certain criterion. The falsity and the folly of the human race have degraded that graceful symbol to the ends of dishonesty; and while some umbrellas, from carelessness in selection, are not strikingly characteristic (for it is only in what a man loves that he displays his real nature), others from certain prudential motives, are chosen directly opposite to the person's disposition. A mendacious umbrella is a sign of great moral degradation. Hypocrisy naturally shelters itself below a silk; while the fast youth goes to visit his religious friends armed with the decent and reputable gingham. May it not be said of the bearers of these inappropriate

umbrellas that they go about the streets "with a lie in their right hand"?

The king of Siam, as we read, besides having a graduated social scale of umbrellas (which was a good thing), prevented the great bulk of his subjects from having any at all, which was certainly a bad thing. We should be sorry to believe that this Eastern legislator was a fool—the idea of an aristocracy of umbrellas is too philosophic to have originated in a nobody—and we have accordingly taken exceeding pains to find out the reason of this harsh restriction. We think we have succeeded; but, while admiring the principle at which he aimed, and while cordially recognising in the Siamese potentate the only man before ourselves who had taken a real grasp of the umbrella, we must be allowed to point out how unphilosophically the great man acted in this particular. His object, plainly, was to prevent any unworthy persons from bearing the sacred symbol of domestic virtues. We cannot excuse his limiting these virtues to the circle of his court. We must only remember that such was the feeling of the age in which he lived. Liberalism had not yet raised the war-cry of the working classes. But here was his mistake: it was a needless regulation. Except in a very few cases of hypocrisy joined to a powerful intellect, men, not by nature *umbrellarians,* have tried again and again to become so by art, and yet have failed—have expended their patrimony in the purchase of umbrella after umbrella, and yet have systematically lost them, and have finally, with contrite spirits and shrunken purses, given up their vain struggle, and relied on theft and borrowing for the remainder of their lives. This is the most remarkable fact that we have had occasion to notice; and yet we challenge the candid reader to call it in question. Now, as there cannot be any *moral selection* in a mere dead piece of furniture—as the umbrella cannot be supposed to have an affinity for individual men equal and reciprocal to that which men certainly feel towards individual umbrellas—we took the trouble of

consulting a scientific friend as to whether there was any possible physical explanation of the phenomenon. He was unable to supply a plausible theory, or even hypothesis; but we extract from his letter the following interesting passage relative to the physical peculiarities of umbrellas: " Not the least important, and by far the most curious property of the umbrella, is the energy which it displays in affecting the atmospheric strata. There is no fact in meteorology better established—indeed, it is almost the only one on which meteorologists are agreed—than that the carriage of an umbrella produces desiccation of the air; while if it be left at home, aqueous vapour is largely produced, and is soon deposited in the form of rain. No theory," my friend continues, " competent to explain this hygrometric law has yet been given (as far as I am aware) by Herschel, Dove, Glaisher, Tait, Buchan, or any other writer; nor do I pretend to supply the defect. I venture, however, to throw out the conjecture that it will be ultimately found to belong to the same class of natural laws as that agreeable to which a slice of toast always descends with the buttered surface downwards."

But it is time to draw to a close. We could expatiate much longer upon this topic, but want of space constrains us to leave unfinished these few desultory remarks—slender contributions towards a subject which has fallen sadly backwards, and which, we grieve to say, was better understood by the king of Siam in 1686 than by all the philosophers of to-day. If, however, we have awakened in any rational mind an interest in the symbolism of umbrellas—in any generous heart a more complete sympathy with the dumb companion of his daily walk—or in any grasping spirit a pure notion of respectability strong enough to make him expend his six-and-twenty shillings—we shall have deserved well of the world, to say nothing of the many industrious persons employed in the manufacture of the article.

V

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NOMENCLATURE

"How many Cæsars and Pompeys, by mere inspirations of the names, have been rendered worthy of them? And how many are there, who might have done exceeding well in the world, had not their characters and spirits been totally depressed and Nicodemus'd into nothing?"—*Tristram Shandy,* vol. i. chap. xix.

SUCH were the views of the late Walter Shandy, Esq., Turkey merchant. To the best of my belief, Mr. Shandy is the first who fairly pointed out the incalculable influence of nomenclature upon the whole life —who seems first to have recognised the one child, happy in an heroic appellation, soaring upwards on the wings of fortune, and the other, like a dead sailor in his shotted hammock, haled down by sheer weight of name into the abysses of social failure. Solomon possibly had his eye on some such theory when he said that "a good name is better than precious ointment"; and perhaps we may trace a similar spirit in the compilers of the English Catechism, and the affectionate interest with which they linger round the catechumen's name at the very threshold of their work. But, be these as they may, I think no one can censure me for appending, in pursuance of the expressed wish of his son, the Turkey merchant's name to his system, and pronouncing, without further preface, a short epitome of the *Shandean Philosophy of Nomenclature.*

To begin, then: the influence of our name makes itself felt from the very cradle. As a schoolboy I remember the pride with which I hailed Robin Hood, Robert Bruce, and Robert le Diable as my name-fellows; and

the feeling of sore disappointment that fell on my heart when I found a freebooter or a general who did not share with me a single one of my numerous *prænomina*. Look at the delight with which two children find they have the same name. They are friends from that moment forth; they have a bond of union stronger than exchange of nuts and sweetmeats. This feeling, I own, wears off in later life. Our names lose their freshness and interest, become trite and indifferent. But this, dear reader, is merely one of the sad effects of those "shades of the prison-house" which come gradually betwixt us and nature with advancing years; it affords no weapon against the philosophy of names.

In after life, although we fail to trace its working, that name which careless godfathers lightly applied to your unconscious infancy will have been moulding your character, and influencing with irresistible power the whole course of your earthly fortunes. But the last name, overlooked by Mr. Shandy, is no whit less important as a condition of success. Family names, we must recollect, are but inherited nicknames; and if the *sobriquet* were applicable to the ancestor, it is most likely applicable to the descendant also. You would not expect to find Mr. M'Phun acting as a mute, or Mr. M'Lumpha excelling as a professor of dancing. Therefore, in what follows, we shall consider names, independent of whether they are first or last. And to begin with, look what a pull *Cromwell* had over *Pym*—the one name full of a resonant imperialism, the other, mean, pettifogging, and unheroic to a degree. Who would expect eloquence from *Pym*—who would read poems by *Pym*—who would bow to the opinion of *Pym?* He might have been a dentist, but he should never have aspired to be a statesman. I can only wonder that he succeeded as he did. Pym and Habakkuk stand first upon the roll of men who have triumphed, by sheer force of genius, over the most unfavourable appellations. But even these have suffered; and had they been more fitly named, the one might have been Lord Protector,

and the other have shared the laurels with Isaiah. In this matter we must not forget that all our great poets have borne great names. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth, Shelley—what a constellation of lordly words! Not a single commonplace name among them—not a Brown, not a Jones, not a Robinson; they are all names that one would stop and look at on a door-plate. Now, imagine if *Pepys* had tried to clamber somehow into the enclosure of poetry, what a blot would that word have made upon the list! The thing was impossible. In the first place, a certain natural consciousness that men have would have held him down to the level of his name, would have prevented him from rising above the Pepsine standard, and so haply withheld him altogether from attempting verse. Next, the booksellers would refuse to publish, and the world to read them, on the mere evidence of the fatal appellation. And now, before I close this section, I must say one word as to *punnable* names, names that stand alone, that have a significance and life apart from him that bears them. These are the bitterest of all. One friend of mine goes bowed and humble through life under the weight of this misfortune; for it is an awful thing when a man's name is a joke, when he cannot be mentioned without exciting merriment, and when even the intimation of his death bids fair to carry laughter into many a home.

So much for people who are badly named. Now for people who are *too* well named, who go top-heavy from the font, who are baptised into a false position, and find themselves beginning life eclipsed under the fame of some of the great ones of the past. A man, for instance, called William Shakespeare could never dare to write plays. He is thrown into too humbling an apposition with the author of *Hamlet*. His own name coming after is such an anticlimax. "The plays of William Shakespeare?" says the reader—"Oh no! The plays of William Shakespeare Cockerill," and he throws the book aside. In wise pursuance of such views, Mr.

John Milton Hengler, who not long since delighted us in this favoured town, has never attempted to write an epic, but has chosen a new path, and has excelled upon the tight-rope. A marked example of triumph over this is the case of Mr. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. On the face of the matter, I should have advised him to imitate the pleasing modesty of the last-named gentleman, and confine his ambition to the sawdust. But Mr. Rossetti has triumphed. He has even dared to translate from his mighty name-father; and the voice of fame supports him in his boldness.

Dear reader, one might write a year upon this matter. A lifetime of comparison and research could scarce suffice for its elucidation. So here, if it please you, we shall let it rest. Slight as these notes have been, I would that the great founder of the system had been alive to see them. How he had warmed and brightened, how his persuasive eloquence would have fallen on the ears of Toby; and what a letter of praise and sympathy would not the editor have received before the month was out! Alas! the thing was not to be. Walter Shandy died and was duly buried, while yet his theory lay forgotten and neglected by his fellow-countrymen. But, reader, the day will come, I hope, when a paternal government will stamp out, as seeds of national weakness, all depressing patronymics, and when godfathers and godmothers will soberly and earnestly debate the interest of the nameless one, and not rush blindfold to the christening. In these days there shall be written a *Godfather's Assistant*, in shape of a dictionary of names, with their concomitant virtues and vices; and this book shall be scattered broadcast through the land, and shall be on the table of every one eligible for godfathership, until such a thing as a vicious or untoward appellation shall have ceased from off the face of the earth.

SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

I. This paper was read before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts on 27th March, 1871, and awarded the Society's Silver Medal.

II. This was read before the Royal Society, Edinburgh, 19th May, 1873. It has been reprinted from the *Proceedings* R. S. E.

SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

I.

ON A NEW FORM OF INTERMITTENT LIGHT FOR LIGHTHOUSES

THE necessity for marked characteristics in coast illumination increases with the number of lights. The late Mr. Robert Stevenson, my grandfather, contributed two distinctions, which he called respectively the *intermittent* and the *flashing* light. It is only to the former of these that I have to refer in the present paper. The intermittent light was first introduced at Tarbetness in 1830, and is already in use at eight stations on the coasts of the United Kingdom. As constructed originally, it was an arrangement by which a fixed light was alternately eclipsed and revealed. These recurrent occultations and revelations produce an effect totally different from that of the revolving light, which comes gradually into its full strength, and as gradually fades away. The changes in the intermittent, on the other hand, are immediate; a certain duration of darkness is followed at once and without the least gradation by a certain period of light. The arrangement employed by my grandfather to effect this object consisted of two opaque cylindric shades or extinguishers, one of which descended from the roof, while the other ascended from below to meet it, at a fixed interval. The light was thus entirely intercepted.

At a later period, at the harbour light of Troon, Mr. Wilson, C.E., produced an intermittent light by the use of gas, which leaves little to be desired and which

is still in use at Troon harbour. By a simple mechanical contrivance, the gas-jet was suddenly lowered to the point of extinction, and, after a set period, as suddenly raised again. The chief superiority of this form of intermittent light is economy in the consumption of gas. In the original design, of course, the oil continues uselessly to illuminate the interior of the screens during the period of occultation.

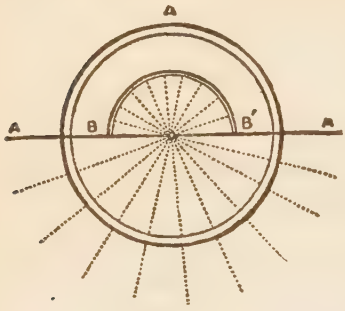

FIG. 1.

Mr. Wilson's arrangement has been lately resuscitated by Mr. Wigham of Dublin, in connection with his new gas-burner.

Gas, however, is inapplicable to many situations; and it has occurred to me that the desired result might be effected with strict economy with oil lights in the following manner:

In Fig. 1, *AAA* represents in plan an ordinary Fresnel's dioptric fixed light apparatus, and *BB′* a hemispherical mirror (either metallic or dioptric on my father's principle) which is made to revolve with uniform speed about the burner. This mirror, it is obvious, intercepts the rays of one hemisphere, and, returning them through the flame (less loss by absorption, etc.), spreads them equally over the other. In

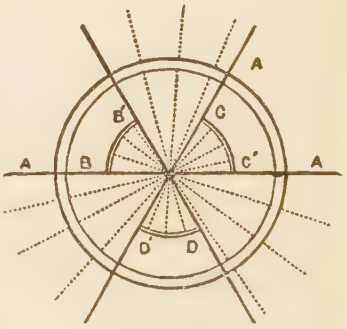

FIG. 2.

this way 180° of light pass regularly the eye of the seaman; and are followed at once by 180° of darkness. As the hemispherical mirror begins to open the observer receives the full light, since the whole lit hemisphere is illuminated with strict equality; and as it closes again, he passes into darkness.

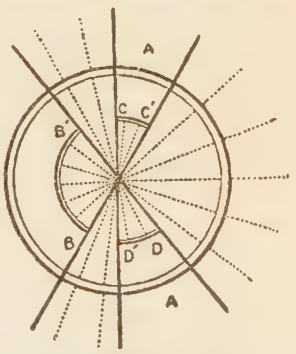

FIG. 3.

Other characteristics can be produced by different modifications of the above. In Fig. 2 the original hemispherical mirror is shown broken up into three different sectors, *BB'*, *CC'*, and *DD'*; so that with the same velocity of revolution the periods of light and darkness will be produced in quicker succession. In this figure (Fig. 2) the three sectors have been shown as subtending equal angles, but if one of them were increased in size and the other two diminished (as in Fig. 3) we should have one long steady illumination and two short flashes at each revolution. Again, the number of sectors may be increased; and by varying both their number and their relative size, a number of additional characteristics are attainable.

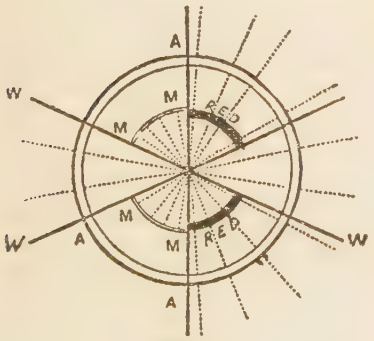

FIG. 4.

Colour may also be introduced as a means of distinction. Coloured glass may be set in the alternate

spaces; but it is necessary to remark that these coloured sectors will be inferior in power to those which remain white. This objection is, however, obviated to a large extent (especially where the dioptric spherical mirror is used) by such an arrangement as is shown in Fig. 4; where the two sectors, *WW*, are left unassisted, while the two with the red screens are reinforced respectively by the two sectors of mirror, *MM*.

Another mode of holophotally producing the intermittent light has been suggested by my father, and is shown in Fig. 5. It consists of alternate and opposite sectors of dioptric spherical mirror, *MM*, and of Fresnel's fixed light apparatus, *AA*. By the revolution of this composite frame about the burner, the same immediate alternation of light and darkness is produced, the first when the front of the fixed panel, and the second when the back of the mirror, is presented to the eye of the sailor.

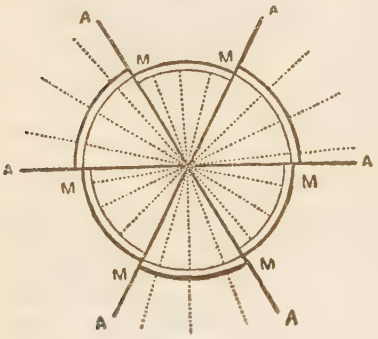

FIG. 5.

One advantage of the method that I propose is this, that while we are able to produce a plain intermittent light; an intermittent light of variable period, ranging from a brief flash to a steady illumination of half the revolution; and finally, a light combining the immediate occultation of the intermittent with combination and change of colour, we can yet preserve comparative lightness in the revolving parts, and consequent economy in the driving machinery. It must, however, be noticed, that none of these last methods are applicable to cases where more than one radiant is employed; for these cases, either my grandfather's or Mr. Wilson's contrivance must be resorted to.

II

ON THE THERMAL INFLUENCE OF FORESTS

THE opportunity of an experiment on a comparatively large scale, and under conditions of comparative isolation, can occur but rarely in such a science as Meteorology. Hence Mr. Milne Home's proposal for the plantation of Malta seemed to offer an exceptional opportunity for progress. Many of the conditions are favourable to the simplicity of the result; and it seemed natural that, if a searching and systematic series of observations were to be immediately set afoot, and continued during the course of the plantation and the growth of the wood, some light would be thrown on the still doubtful question of the climatic influence of forests.

Mr. Milne Home expects, as I gather, a three-fold result: 1st, an increased and better-regulated supply of available water; 2nd, an increased rainfall; and, 3rd, a more equable climate, with more temperate summer heat and winter cold.[1] As to the first of these expectations, I suppose there can be no doubt that it is justified by facts; but it may not be unnecessary to guard against any confusion of the first with the second. Not only does the presence of growing timber increase and regulate the supply of running and spring water independently of any change in the amount of

[1] *Jour. Scot. Met. Soc.*, New Ser., xxvi, 35.

rainfall, but, as Boussingault found at Marmato,[1] denudation of forest is sufficient to decrease that supply, even when the rainfall has increased instead of diminished in amount. The second and third effects stand apart, therefore, from any question as to the utility of Mr. Milne Home's important proposal; they are both, perhaps, worthy of discussion at the present time, but I wish to confine myself in the present paper to the examination of the third alone.

A wood, then, may be regarded either as a *superficies* or as a *solid;* that is, either as a part of the earth's surface slightly elevated above the rest, or as a diffused and heterogeneous body displacing a certain portion of free and mobile atmosphere. It is primarily in the first character that it attracts our attention, as a radiating and absorbing surface, exposed to the sun and the currents of the air; such that, if we imagine a plateau of meadow-land or bare earth raised to the mean level of the forest's exposed leaf-surface, we shall have an agent entirely similar in kind, although perhaps widely differing in the amount of action. Now, by comparing a tract of wood with such a plateau as we have just supposed, we shall arrive at a clear idea of the specialties of the former. In the first place, then, the mass of foliage may be expected to increase the radiating power of each tree. The upper leaves radiate freely towards the stars and the cold interstellar spaces, while the lower ones radiate to those above and receive less heat in return; consequently, during the absence of the sun, each tree cools gradually downward from top to bottom. Hence we must take into account not merely the area of leaf-surface actually exposed to the sky, but, to a greater or less extent, the surface of every leaf in the whole tree or the whole wood. This is evidently a point in which the action of the forest may be expected to differ from that of the meadow or naked earth; for though, of course, inferior strata

[1] Quoted by Mr. Milne Home.

tend to a certain extent to follow somewhat the same course as the mass of inferior leaves, they do so to a less degree—conduction, and the conduction of a very slow conductor, being substituted for radiation.

We come next, however, to a second point of difference. In the case of the meadow, the chilled air continues to lie upon the surface, the grass, as Humboldt says, remaining all night submerged in the stratum of lowest temperature; while in the case of trees, the coldest air is continually passing down to the space underneath the boughs, or what we may perhaps term the crypt of the forest. Here it is that the consideration of any piece of woodland conceived as a solid comes naturally in; for this solid contains a portion of the atmosphere, partially cut off from the rest, more or less excluded from the influence of wind, and lying upon a soil that is screened all day from isolation by the impending mass of foliage. In this way (and chiefly, I think, from the exclusion of winds), we have underneath the radiating leaf-surface a stratum of comparatively stagnant air, protected from many sudden variations of temperature, and tending only slowly to bring itself into equilibrium with the more general changes that take place in the free atmosphere.

Over and above what has been mentioned, thermal effects have been attributed to the vital activity of the leaves in the transudation of water, and even to the respiration and circulation of living wood. The whole actual amount of thermal influence, however, is so small that I may rest satisfied with the mere mention. If these actions have any effect at all, it must be practically insensible; and the others that I have already stated are not only sufficient validly to account for all the observed differences, but would lead naturally to the expectation of differences very much larger and better marked. To these observations I proceed at once. Experience has been acquired upon the following three points: 1, The relation between the temperature

of the trunk of a tree and the temperature of the surrounding atmosphere; 2, The relation between the temperature of the air under a wood and the temperature of the air outside; and 3, the relation between the temperature of the air above a wood and the temperature of the air above cleared land.

As to the first question, there are several independent series of observations; and I may remark in passing, what applies to all, that allowance must be made throughout for some factor of specific heat. The results were as follows: The seasonal and monthly means in the tree and in the air were not sensibly different. The variations in the tree, in M. Becquerel's own observations, appear as considerably less than a fourth of those in the atmosphere, and he has calculated, from observations made at Geneva between 1796 and 1798 that the variations in the tree were less than a fifth of those in the air; but the tree in this case, besides being of a different species, was seven or eight inches thicker than the one experimented on by himself.[1] The variations in the tree, therefore, are always less than those in the air, the ratio between the two depending apparently on the thickness of the tree in question and the rapidity with which the variations followed upon one another. The times of the maxima, moreover, were widely different: in the air, the maximum occurs at 2 p.m. in winter, and at 3 p.m. in summer; in the tree, it occurs in winter at 6 p.m., and in summer between 10 and 11 p.m. At nine in the morning in the month of June, the temperatures of the tree and of the air had come to an equilibrium. A similar difference of progression is visible in the means, which differ most in spring and autumn, and tend to equalise themselves in winter and in summer. But it appears most strikingly in the case of variations somewhat longer in period than the daily ranges. The following temperatures occurred during M. Becquerel's observations in the Jardin des Plantes:

[1] *Atlas Météorologique de l'Observatoire Impérial,* 1867.

Date. 1859.	Temperature of the Air.	Temperature in the Tree.
Dec. 15	26.78°	32°
" 16	19.76°	32°
" 17	17.78°	31.46°
" 18	13.28°	30.56°
" 19	12.02°	28.40°
" 20	12.54°	25.34°
" 21	38.30°	27.86°
" 22	43.34°	30.92°
" 23	44.06°	31.46°

A moment's comparison of the two columns will make the principle apparent. The temperature of the air falls nearly fifteen degrees in five days; the temperature of the tree, sluggishly following, falls in the same time less than four degrees. Between the 19th and 20th the temperature of the air has changed its direction of motion, and risen nearly a degree; but the temperature of the tree persists in its former course, and continues to fall nearly three degrees farther. On the 21st there comes a sudden increase of heat, a sudden thaw; the temperature of the air rises twenty-five and a half degrees; the change at last reaches the tree, but only raises its temperature by less than three degrees; and even two days afterwards, when the air is already twelve degrees above freezing-point, the tree is still half a degree below it. Take, again, the following case:

Date. 1859.	Temperature of the Air.	Temperature in the Tree.
July 13	84.92°	76.28°
" 14	82.58°	78.62°
" 15	80.42°	77.72°
" 16	79.88°	78.44°
" 17	73.22°	75.92°
" 18	68.54°	74.30°
" 19	65.66°	70.70°

The same order reappears. From the 13th to the 19th the temperature of the air steadily falls, while the temperature of the tree continues apparently to follow the course of previous variations, and does not really begin to fall, is not really affected by the ebb of heat, until the 17th, three days at least after it had been operating in the air.[1] Hence we may conclude that all variations of the temperature of the air, whatever be their period, from twenty-four hours up to twelve months, are followed in the same manner by variations in the temperature of the tree; and that those in the tree are always less in amount and considerably slower of occurrence than those in the air. The *thermal sluggishness,* so to speak, seems capable of explaining all the phenomena of the case without any hypothetical vital power of resisting temperatures below the freezing-point, such as is hinted at even by Becquerel.

Réaumur, indeed, is said to have observed temperatures in slender trees nearly thirty degrees higher than the temperature of the air in the sun; but we are not informed as to the conditions under which this observation was made, and it is therefore impossible to assign to it its proper value. The sap of the ice-plant is said to be materially colder than the surrounding atmosphere; and there are several other somewhat incongruous facts, which tend, at first sight, to favour the view of some inherent power of resistance in some plants to high temperatures, and in others to low temperatures.[2] But such a supposition seems in the meantime to be gratuitous. Keeping in view the thermal redispositions, which must be greatly favoured by the ascent of the sap, and the difference between the condition as to temperature of such parts as the root, the heart of the trunk, and the extreme foliage, and never forgetting the unknown factor of specific heat, we may

[1] *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie,* 29th March, 1869.

[2] *Professor Balfour's Class Book of Botany,* Physiology, chap. xii, p. 670.

still regard it as possible to account for all anomalies without the aid of any such hypothesis. We may, therefore, I think, disregard small exceptions, and state the result as follows:

If, after every rise or fall, the temperature of the air remained stationary for a length of time proportional to the amount of the change, it seems probable—setting aside all question of vital heat—that the temperature of the tree would always finally equalise itself with the new temperature of the air, and that the range in tree and atmosphere would thus become the same. This pause, however, does not occur: the variations follow each other without interval; and the slow-conducting wood is never allowed enough time to overtake the rapid changes of the more sensitive air. Hence, so far as we can see at present, trees appear to be simply bad conductors, and to have no more influence upon the temperature of their surroundings than is fully accounted for by the consequent tardiness of their thermal variations.

Observations bearing on the second of the three points have been made by Becquerel in France, by La Cour in Jutland and Iceland, and by Rivoli at Posen. The results are perfectly congruous. Becquerel's observations[1] were made under wood, and about a hundred yards outside in open ground, at three stations in the district of Montargis, Loiret. There was a difference of more than one degree Fahrenheit between the mean annual temperatures in favour of the open ground. The mean summer temperature in the wood was from two to three degrees lower than the mean summer temperature outside. The mean maxima in the wood were also lower than those without by a little more than two degrees. Herr La Cour[2] found the daily range consistently smaller inside the wood than outside. As far as regards the mean winter temperatures, there is an excess in favour of the forests, but so trifling in amount as to be unworthy of much consideration. Libri found

[1] *Comptes Rendus,* 1867 and 1869. [2] See his paper.

that the minimum winter temperatures were not sensibly lower in Florence, after the Apennines had been denuded of forest, than they had been before.[1] The disheartening contradictoriness of his observations on this subject led Herr Rivoli to the following ingenious and satisfactory comparison.[2] Arranging his results according to the wind that blew on the day of observation, he set against each other the variation of the temperature under wood from that without, and the variation of the temperature of the wind from the local mean for the month:

Wind	N.	N.E.	E.	S.E.	S.	S. W.	W.	N.W.
Var. in Wood...	+0.60	+0.26	+0.26	+0.04	−0.04	−0.20	+0.16	+0.07
Var. in Wind...	−0.30	−2.60	−3.30	−1.20	+1.00	+1.30	+1.00	+1.00

From this curious comparison, it becomes apparent that the variations of the difference in question depend upon the amount of variations of temperature which take place in the free air, and on the slowness with which such changes are communicated to the stagnant atmosphere of woods; in other words, as Herr Rivoli boldly formulates it, a forest is simply a bad conductor. But this is precisely the same conclusion as we have already arrived at with regard to individual trees; and in Herr Rivoli's table, what we see is just another case of what we saw in M. Becquerel's—the different progression of temperatures. It must be obvious, however, that the thermal condition of a single tree must be different in many ways from that of a combination of trees and more or less stagnant air, such as we call a forest. And accordingly we find, in the case of the latter, the following new feature: The mean yearly temperature of woods is lower than the

[1] *Annales de Chimie et de Physique*, xlv, 1830. A more detailed comparison of the climate in question would be a most interesting and important contribution to the subject.

[2] Reviewed in the *Austrian Meteorological Magazine*, vol. iv, p. 543.

mean yearly temperature of free air, while they are decidedly colder in summer, and very little, if at all, warmer in winter. Hence, on the whole, forests are colder than cleared lands. But this is just what might have been expected from the amount of evaporation, the continued descent of cold air, and its stagnation in the close, and sunless crypt of a forest; and one can only wonder here, as elsewhere, that the resultant difference is so insignificant and doubtful.

We come now to the third point in question, the thermal influence of woods upon the air above them. It will be remembered that we have seen reason to believe their effect to be similar to that of certain other surfaces, except in so far as it may be altered, in the case of the forest, by the greater extent of effective radiating area, and by the possibility of generating a descending cold current as well as an ascending hot one. M. Becquerel is (so far as I can learn) the only observer who has taken up the elucidation of this subject. He placed his thermometers at three points:[1] *A* and *B* were both about seventy feet above the surface of the ground; but *A* was at the summit of a chestnut tree, while *B* was in the free air, fifty feet away from the other. *C* was four or five feet above the ground, with a northern exposure; there was also a fourth station to the south, at the same level as this last, but its readings are very seldom referred to. After several years of observation, the mean temperature at *A* was found to be between one and two degrees higher than that at *B*. The order of progression of differences is as instructive here as in the two former investigations. The maximum difference in favour of station *A* occurred between three and five in the afternoon, later or sooner according as there had been more or less sunshine, and ranged sometimes as high as seven degrees. After this the difference kept declining until sunrise, when there was often a difference of a degree, or a degree and a half, upon the other side. On cloudy

[1] *Comptes Rendus*, 28th May, 1860.

days the difference tended to a minimum. During a rainy month of April, for example, the difference in favour of station *A* was less than half a degree; the first fifteen days of May following, however, were sunny, and the difference rose to more than a degree and a half.[1] It will be observed that I have omitted up to the present point all mention of station *C*. I do so because M. Becquerel's language leaves it doubtful whether the observations made at this station are logically comparable with those made at the other two. If the end in view were to compare the progression of temperatures above the earth, above a tree, and in free air, removed from all such radiative and absorptive influences, it is plain that all three should have been equally exposed to the sun or kept equally in shadow. As the observations were made, they give us no notion of the relative action of the earth-surface and forest-surface upon the temperature of the contiguous atmosphere; and this, as it seems to me, was just the *crux* of the problem. So far, however, as they go, they seem to justify the view that all these actions are the same in kind, however they may differ in degree. We find the forest heating the air during the day, and heating it more or less according as there has been more or less sunshine for it to absorb, and we find it also chilling it during the night; both of which are actions common to any radiating surface, and would be produced, if with differences of amount and time, by any other such surface raised to the mean level of the exposed foliage.

To recapitulate:

1st. We find that single trees appear to act simply as bad conductors.

2nd. We find that woods, regarded as solids, are, on the whole, slightly lower in temperature than the free air which they have displaced, and that they tend slowly to adapt themselves to the various thermal changes that take place without them.

[1] *Comptes Rendus*, 20th May, 1861.

3rd. We find forests regarded as surfaces acting like any other part of the earth's surface, probably with more or less difference in amount and progression, which we still lack the information necessary to estimate.

All this done, I am afraid that there can be little doubt that the more general climatic investigations will be long and vexatious. Even in South America, with extremely favourable conditions, the result is far from being definite. Glancing over the table published by M. Becquerel in his book on climates, from the observations of Humboldt, Hall, Boussingault, and others, it becomes evident, I think, that nothing can be founded upon the comparisons therein instituted; that all reasoning, in the present state of our information, is premature and unreliable. Strong statements have certainly been made; and particular cases lend themselves to the formation of hasty judgments. "From the Bay of Cupica to the Gulf of Guayaquil," says M. Boussingault, "the country is covered with immense forests and traversed by numerous rivers; it rains there almost ceaselessly; and the mean temperature of this moist district scarcely reaches 78.8° F. . . . At Payta commence the sandy deserts of Priura and Sechura; to the constant humidity of Choco succeeds almost at once an extreme of dryness; and the mean temperature of the coast increases at the same time by 1.8° F."[1] Even in this selected favourable instance it might be argued that the part performed in the change by the presence or absence of forest was comparatively small; there seems to have been, at the same time, an entire change of soil; and, in our present ignorance, it would be difficult to say by how much this of itself is able to affect the climate. Moreover it is possible that the humidity of the one district is due to other causes besides the presence of wood, or even that the presence of wood is itself only an effect of some more general difference or combination of differ-

[1] Becquerel, *Climats*, p. 141.

ences. Be that as it may, however, we have only to look a little longer at the table before referred to, to see how little weight can be laid on such special instances. Let us take five stations, all in this very district of Choco. Hacquita is eight hundred and twenty feet above Novita, and their mean temperatures are the same. Alto de Mombu, again, is five hundred feet higher than Hacquita, and the mean temperature has here fallen nearly two degrees. Go up another five hundred feet to Tambo de la Orquita, and again we find no fall in the mean temperature. Go up some five hundred feet farther to Chami, and there is a fall in the mean temperature of nearly six degrees. Such numbers are evidently quite untrustworthy; and hence we may judge how much confidence can be placed in any generalisation from these South American mean temperatures.

The question is probably considered too simply—too much to the neglect of concurrent influences. Until we know, for example, somewhat more of the comparative radiant powers of different soils, we cannot expect any very definite result. A change of temperature would certainly be effected by the plantation of such a marshy district as the Sologne, because, if nothing else were done, the roots might pierce the impenetrable subsoil, allow the surface-water to drain itself off, and thus dry the country. But might not the change be quite different if the soil planted were a shifting sand, which, *fixed* by the roots of the trees, would become gradually covered with a vegetable earth, and thus be changed from dry to wet? Again, the complication and conflict of effects arises, not only from the soil, vegetation, and geographical position of the place of the experiment itself, but from the distribution of similar or different conditions in its immediate neighbourhood, and probably to great distances on every side. A forest, for example, as we know from Herr Rivoli's comparison, would exercise a perfectly different influence in a cold country subject to warm winds, and in a warm country

subject to cold winds; so that our question might meet with different solutions even on the east and west coasts of Great Britain.

The consideration of such a complexity points more and more to the plantation of Malta as an occasion of special importance; its insular position and the unity of its geological structure both tend to simplify the question. There are certain points about the existing climate, moreover, which seem specially calculated to throw the influence of woods into a strong relief. Thus, during four summer months, there is practically no rainfall. Thus, again, the northerly winds, when stormy, and especially in winter, tend to depress the temperature very suddenly; and thus, too, the southerly and south-westerly winds, which raise the temperature during their prevalence to from eighty-eight to ninety-eight degrees, seldom last longer than a few hours; insomuch that "their disagreeable heat and dryness may be escaped by carefully closing the windows and doors of apartments at their onset."[1] Such sudden and short variations seem just what is wanted to accentuate the differences in question. Accordingly, the opportunity seems one not lightly to be lost, and the British Association or this Society itself might take the matter up and establish a series of observations, to be continued during the next few years. Such a combination of favourable circumstances may not occur again for years; and when the whole subject is at a standstill for want of facts, the present occasion ought not to go past unimproved.

Such observations might include the following:

The observation of maximum and minimum thermometers in three different classes of situation—*videlicet*, in the areas selected for plantation themselves, at places in the immediate neighbourhood of those areas where the external influence might be expected to reach its maximum and at places distant from those areas where the influence might be expected to be least.

[1] Scoresby-Jackson's *Medical Climatology*.

The operation of rain-gauges and hygrometers at the same three descriptions of locality.

In addition to the ordinary hours of observation, special readings of the thermometers should be made as often as possible at a change of wind and throughout the course of the short hot breezes alluded to already, in order to admit of the recognition and extension of Herr Rivoli's comparison.

Observation of the periods and forces of the land and sea breezes.

Gauging of the principal springs, both in the neighborhood of the areas of plantation and at places far removed from those areas.

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SKETCHES

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SKETCHES

I

A RETROSPECT

(A FRAGMENT: WRITTEN AT DUNOON, 1870)

IF there is anything that delights me in Hazlitt, beyond the charm of style and the unconscious portrait of a vain and powerful spirit which his works present, it is the loving and tender way in which he returns again to the memory of the past. These little recollections of bygone happiness were too much a part of the man to be carelessly or poorly told. The imaginary landscapes and visions of the most ecstatic dreamer can never rival such recollections, told simply perhaps, but still told (as they could not fail to be) with precision, delicacy, and evident delight. They are too much loved by the author not to be palated by the reader. But beyond the mere felicity of pencil, the nature of the piece could never fail to move my heart. When I read his essay "On the Past and Future," every word seemed to be something I had said myself. I could have thought he had been eavesdropping at the door of my heart, so entire was the coincidence between his writing and my thought. It is a sign perhaps of a somewhat vain disposition. The future is nothing; but the past is myself, my own history, the seed of my present thoughts, the mould of my present disposition. It is not in vain that I return to the nothings of my childhood; for every one of them has left some stamp upon me or put some fetter on my boasted

free will. In the past is my present fate; and in the past also is my real life. It is not the past only, but the past that has been many years in that tense. The doings and actions of last year are as uninteresting and vague to me as the blank gulf of the future, the *tabula rasa* that may never be anything else. I remember a confused hotchpotch of unconnected events, a "chaos without form, and void"; but nothing salient or striking rises from the dead level of "flat, stale, and unprofitable" generality. When we are looking at a landscape we think ourselves pleased; but it is only when it comes back upon us by the fire o' nights that we can disentangle the main charm from the thick of particulars. It is just so with what is lately past. It is too much loaded with detail to be distinct; and the canvas is too large for the eye to encompass. But this is no more the case when our recollections have been strained long enough through the hour-glass of time; when they have been the burthen of so much thought, the charm and comfort of so many a vigil. All that is worthless has been sieved and sifted out of them. Nothing remains but the brightest lights and the darkest shadows. When we see a mountain country near at hand, the spurs and haunches crowd up in eager rivalry, and the whole range seems to have shrugged its shoulders to its ears, till we cannot tell the higher from the lower: but when we are far off, these lesser prominences are melted back into the bosom of the rest, or have set behind the round horizon of the plain, and the highest peaks stand forth in lone and sovereign dignity against the sky. It is just the same with our recollections. We require to draw back and shade our eyes before the picture dawns upon us in full breadth and outline. Late years are still in limbo to us; but the more distant past is all that we possess in life, the corn already harvested and stored for ever in the grange of memory. The doings of to-day at some future time will gain the required offing; I shall learn to love the things of my adolescence, as Hazlitt loved them,

and as I love already the recollections of my childhood. They will gather interest with every year. They will ripen in forgotten corners of my memory; and some day I shall waken and find them vested with new glory and new pleasantness.

It is for stirring the chords of memory, then, that I love Hazlitt's essays, and for the same reason (I remember) he himself threw in his allegiance to Rousseau, saying of him, what was so true of his own writings: "He seems to gather up the past moments of his being like drops of honey-dew to distil some precious liquor from them; his alternate pleasures and pains are the bead-roll that he tells over and piously worships; he makes a rosary of the flowers of hope and fancy that strewed his earliest years." How true are these words when applied to himself! and how much I thank him that it was so! All my childhood is a golden age to me. I have no recollection of bad weather. Except one or two storms where grandeur had impressed itself on my mind, the whole time seems steeped in sunshine. "*Et ego in Arcadia vixi*" would be no empty boast upon my grave. If I desire to live long, it is that I may have the more to look back upon. Even to one, like the unhappy Duchess,

> "Acquainted with sad misery
> As the tamed galley-slave is with his oar,"

and seeing over the night of troubles no "lily-wristed morn" of hope appear, a retrospect of even chequered and doubtful happiness in the past may sweeten the bitterness of present tears. And here I may be excused if I quote a passage from an unpublished drama (the unpublished is perennial, I fancy) which the author believes was not all devoid of the flavour of our elder dramatists. However this may be, it expresses better than I could some further thoughts on this same subject. The heroine is taken by a minister to the grave, where already some have been recently buried, and

where her sister's lover is destined to rejoin them on the following day.[1]

. . . . . .

What led me to the consideration of this subject, and what has made me take up my pen to-night, is the rather strange coincidence of two very different accidents—a prophecy of my future and a return into my past. No later than yesterday, seated in the coffee-room here, there came into the tap of the hotel a poor mad Highland woman. The noise of her strained, thin voice brought me out to see her. I could conceive that she had been pretty once, but that was many years ago. She was now withered and fallen-looking. Her hair was thin and straggling, her dress poor and scanty. Her moods changed as rapidly as a weathercock before a thunder-storm. One moment she said her "mutch" was the only thing that gave her comfort, and the next she slackened the strings and let it back upon her neck, in a passion at it for making her too hot. Her talk was a wild, somewhat weird farrago of utterly meaningless balderdash, mere inarticulate gabble, snatches of old Jacobite ballads and exaggerated phrases from the drama, to which she suited equally exaggerated action. She "babbled of green fields" and Highland glens; she prophesied "the drawing of the claymore," with a lofty disregard of cause or common sense; and she broke out suddenly, with uplifted hands and eyes, into ecstatic "Heaven bless hims!" and "Heaven forgive hims!" She had been a camp-follower in her younger days, and she was never tired of expatiating on the gallantry, the fame, and the beauty of the 42nd Highlanders. Her patriotism knew no bounds, and her prolixity was much on the same scale. This Witch of Endor offered to tell my fortune, with much dignity and proper oracular enunciation. But on my holding

[1] The quotation here promised from one of the Author's own early dramatic efforts (a tragedy of Semiramis) is not supplied in the MS.—[Ed.]

forth my hand a somewhat ludicrous incident occurred. "Na, na," she said; "wait till I have a draw of my pipe." Down she sat in the corner, puffing vigorously and regaling the lady behind the counter with conversation more remarkable for stinging satire than prophetic dignity. The person in question had "mair weeg than hair on her head" (did not the chignon plead guilty at these words?)—"wad be better if she had less tongue" —and would come at last to the grave, a goal which, in a few words, she invested with "warning circumstance" enough to make a Stoic shudder. Suddenly, in the midst of this, she rose up and beckoned me to approach. The oracles of my Highland sorceress had no claim to consideration except in the matter of obscurity. In "question hard and sentence intricate" she beat the priests of Delphi; in bold, unvarnished falsity (as regards the past) even spirit-rapping was a child to her. All that I could gather may be thus summed up shortly: that I was to visit America, that I was to be very happy, and that I was to be much upon the sea, predictions which, in consideration of an uneasy stomach, I can scarcely think agreeable with one another. Two incidents alone relieved the dead level of idiocy and incomprehensible gabble. The first was the comical announcement that "when I drew fish to the Marquis of Bute, I should take care of my sweetheart," from which I deduce the fact that at some period of my life I shall drive a fishmonger's cart. The second, in the middle of such nonsense, had a touch of the tragic. She suddenly looked at me with an eager glance, and dropped my hand, saying, in what were tones of misery or a very good affectation of them, "Black eyes!" A moment after she was at work again. It is as well to mention that I have not black eyes.[1]

[1] "The old pythoness was right," adds the Author in a note appended to his MS. in 1887; "I have been happy: I did go to America (am even going again—unless——): and I have been twice and once upon the deep." The seafaring part of the prophecy remained to be fulfilled on a far more extended scale in his Pacific voyages of 1888-90.—[Ed.]

This incident, strangely blended of the pathetic and the ludicrous, set my mind at work upon the future; but I could find little interest in the study. Even the predictions of my sibyl failed to allure me, nor could life's prospect charm and detain my attention like its retrospect.

Not far from Dunoon is Rosemore, a house in which I had spent a week or so in my very distant childhood, how distant I have no idea; and one may easily conceive how I looked forward to revisiting this place and so renewing contact with my former self. I was under necessity to be early up, and under necessity also, in the teeth of a bitter spring north-easter, to clothe myself warmly on the morning of my long-promised excursion. The day was as bright as it was cold. Vast irregular masses of white and purple cumulus drifted rapidly over the sky. The great hills, brown with the bloomless heather, were here and there buried in blue shadows, and streaked here and there with sharp stripes of sun. The new-fired larches were green in the glens; and "pale primroses" hid themselves in mossy hollows and under hawthorn roots. All these things were new to me; for I had noticed none of these beauties in my younger days, neither the larch woods, nor the winding road edged in between field and flood, nor the broad, ruffled bosom of the hill-surrounded loch. It was, above all, the height of these hills that astonished me. I remember the existence of hills, certainly, but the picture in my memory was low, featureless, and uninteresting. They seemed to have kept pace with me in my growth, but to a gigantic scale; and the villas that I remembered as half-way up the slope seemed to have been left behind like myself, and now only ringed their mighty feet, white among the newly kindled woods. As I felt myself on the road at last that I had been dreaming of for these many days before, a perfect intoxication of joy took hold upon me; and I was so pleased at my own happiness that I could let none past me till I had taken them into my confidence. I

asked my way from every one, and took good care to let them all know, before they left me, what my object was, and how many years had elapsed since my last visit. I wonder what the good folk thought of me and my communications.

At last, however, after much inquiry, I arrive at the place, make my peace with the gardener, and enter. My disillusion dates from the opening of the garden door. I repine, I find a reluctation of spirit against believing that this is the place. What, is this kail-yard that inexhaustible paradise of a garden in which M—— and I found "elbow-room," and expatiated together without sensible constraint? Is that little tufted slope the huge and perilous green bank down which I counted it a feat, and the gardener a sin, to run? Are these two squares of stone, some two feet high, the pedestals on which I walked with such a penetrating sense of dizzy elevation, and which I had expected to find on a level with my eyes? Ay, the place is no more like what I expected than this bleak April day is like the glorious September with which it is incorporated in my memory. I look at the gardener, disappointment in my face, and tell him that the place seems sorrily shrunken from the high estate that it had held in my remembrance, and he returns, with quiet laughter, by asking me how long it is since I was there. I tell him, and he remembers me. Ah! I say, I was a great nuisance, I believe. But no, my good gardener will plead guilty to having kept no record of my evil-doings, and I find myself much softened towards the place and willing to take a kinder view and pardon its shortcomings for the sake of the gardener and his pretended recollection of myself. And it is just at this stage (to complete my re-establishment) that I see a little boy—the gardener's grandchild—just about the same age and the same height that I must have been in the days when I was here last. My first feeling is one of almost anger, to see him playing on the gravel where I had played before, as if he had usurped something of my

identity; but next moment I feel a softening and a sort of rising and qualm of the throat, accompanied by a pricking heat in the eye-balls. I hastily join conversation with the child, and inwardly felicitate myself that the gardener is opportunely gone for the key of the house. But the child is a sort of homily to me. He is perfectly quiet and resigned, an unconscious hermit. I ask him jocularly if he gets as much abused as I used to do for running down the bank; but the child's perfect seriousness of answer staggers me—"O no, grandpa doesn't allow it—why should he?" I feel caught: I stand abashed at the reproof: I must not expose my childishness again to this youthful disciplinarian, and so I ask him very stately what he is going to be—a good serious practical question, out of delicacy for his parts. He answers that he is going to be a missionary in China, and tells me how a missionary once took him on his knee and told him about missionary work, and asked him if he, too, would not like to become one, to which the child had simply answered in the affirmative. The child is altogether so different from what I have been, is so absolutely complementary to what I now am, that I turn away not a little abashed from the conversation, for there is always something painful in sudden contact with the good qualities that we do not possess. Just then the grandfather returns; and I go with him to the summer-house, where I used to learn my Catechism, to the wall which M—— and I thought it no small exploit to walk upon, and all the other places that I remembered.

In fine, the matter being ended, I turn and go my way home to the hotel, where, in the cold afternoon, I write these notes with the table and chair drawn as near the fire as the rug and the French polish will permit.

One other thing I may as well make a note of, and that is how there arises that strange contradiction of the hills being higher than I had expected, and every-

thing near at hand being so ridiculously smaller. This is a question I think easily answered; the very terms of the problem suggest the solution. To everything near at hand I applied my own stature, as a sort of natural unit of measurement, so that I had no actual image of their dimensions but their ratio to myself; so, of course, as one term of the proportion changed, the other changed likewise, and as my own height increased my notion of things near at hand became equally expanded. But the hills, mark you, were out of my reach: I could not apply myself to them: I had an actual, instead of a proportional eidolon of their magnitude; so that, of course (my eye being larger and flatter nowadays, and so the image presented to me then being in sober earnest smaller than the image presented to me now), I found the hills nearly as much too great as I had found the other things too small.

[*Added the next morning.*]—He who indulges habitually in the intoxicating pleasures of imagination, for the very reason that he reaps a greater pleasure than others, must resign himself to a keener pain, a more intolerable and utter prostration. It is quite possible, and even comparatively easy, so to enfold onself in pleasant fancies that the realities of life may seem but as the white snow-shower in the street, that only gives a relish to the swept hearth and lively fire within. By such means I have forgotten hunger, I have sometimes eased pain, and I have invariably changed into the most pleasant hours of the day those very vacant and idle seasons which would otherwise have hung most heavily upon my hand. But all this is attained by the undue prominence of purely imaginative joys, and consequently the weakening and almost the destruction of reality. This is buying at too great a price. There are seasons when the imagination becomes somehow tranced and surfeited, as it is with me this morning; and then upon what can we fall back? The very faculty that we have fostered and trusted has failed

us in the hour of trial; and we have so blunted and enfeebled our appetite for the others that they are subjectively dead to us. It is just as though a farmer should plant all his fields in potatoes, instead of varying them with grain and pasture; and so, when the disease comes, lose all his harvest, while his neighbours, perhaps, may balance the profit and the loss. Do not suppose that I am exaggerating when I talk about all pleasures seeming stale. To me, at least, the edge of almost everything is put on by imagination; and even nature, in these days when the fancy is drugged and useless, wants half the charm it has in better moments. I can no longer see satyrs in the thicket, or picture a highwayman riding down the lane. The fiat of indifference has gone forth: I am vacant, unprofitable: a leaf on a river with no volition and no aim: a mental drunkard the morning after an intellectual debauch. Yes, I have a more subtle opium in my mind than any apothecary's drug; but it has a sting of its own, and leaves me as flat and helpless as does the other.

II

THE IDEAL HOUSE

TWO things are necessary in any neighborhood where we propose to spend a life: a desert and some living water.

There are many parts of the earth's surface which offer the necessary combination of a certain wildness with a kindly variety. A great prospect is desirable, but the want may be otherwise supplied; even greatness can be found on the small scale; for the mind and eye measure differently. Bold rocks near at hand are more inspiriting than distant Alps, and the thick fern upon a Surrey heath makes a fine forest for the imagination, and the dotted yew-trees noble mountains. A Scottish moor with birches and firs grouped here and there upon a knoll, or one of those rocky sea-side deserts of Provence overgrown with rosemary and thyme and smoking with aroma, are places where the mind is never weary. Forests, being more enclosed, are not at first sight so attractive, but they exercise a spell; they must, however, be diversified with either heather or rock, and are hardly to be considered perfect without conifers. Even sand-hills, with their intricate plan, and their gulls and rabbits, will stand well for the necessary desert.

The house must be within hail of either a little river or the sea. A great river is more fit for poetry than to adorn a neighbourhood; its sweep of waters increases the scale of the scenery and the distance of one notable object from another; and a lively burn gives us, in the space of a few yards, a greater variety of promontory

and islet, of cascade, shallow goil, and boiling pool, with answerable changes both of song and colour, than a navigable stream in many hundred miles. The fish, too, make a more considerable feature of the brook-side, and the trout plumping in the shadow takes the ear. A stream should, besides, be narrow enough to cross, or the burn hard by a bridge, or we are at once shut out of Eden. The quantity of water need be of no concern, for the mind sets the scale, and can enjoy a Niagara Fall of thirty inches. Let us approve the singer of

> "Shallow rivers, by whose falls
> Melodious birds sing madrigals."

If the sea is to be our ornamental water, choose an open sea-board with a heavy beat of surf; one much broken in outline, with small havens and dwarf head-lands; if possible a few islets; and as a first necessity, rocks, reaching out into deep water. Such a rock on a calm day is a better station than the top of Teneriffe or Chimborazo. In short, both for the desert and the water, the conjunction of many near and bold details is bold scenery for the imagination and keeps the mind alive.

Given these two prime luxuries, the nature of the country where we are to live is, I had almost said, indifferent; after that, inside the garden, we can construct a country of our own. Several old trees, a considerable variety of level, several well-grown hedges to divide our garden into provinces, a good extent of old well-set turf, and thickets of shrubs and evergreens to be cut into and cleared at the new owner's pleasure, are the qualities to be sought for in your chosen land. Nothing is more delightful than a succession of small lawns, opening one out of the other through tall hedges; these have all the charm of the old bowling-green repeated, do not require the labour of many trimmers, and afford a series of changes. You must have much lawn against the early summer, so as to have a great

field of daisies, the year's morning frost; as you must have a wood of lilacs, to enjoy to the full the period of their blossoming. Hawthorn is another of the spring's ingredients; but it is even best to have a rough public lane at one side of your enclosure, which, at the right season, shall become an avenue of bloom and odour. The old flowers are the best and should grow carelessly in corners. Indeed, the ideal fortune is to find an old garden, once very richly cared for, since sunk into neglect, and to tend, not repair, that neglect; it will thus have a smack of nature and wildness which skilful dispositions cannot overtake. The gardener should be an idler, and have a gross partiality to the kitchen plots; an eager or toilful gardener misbecomes the garden landscape; a tasteful gardener will be ever meddling, will keep the borders raw, and take the bloom off nature. Close adjoining, if you are in the south, an olive-yard, if in the north, a swarded apple-orchard reaching to the stream, completes your miniature domain; but this is perhaps best entered through a door in the high fruit-wall; so that you close the door behind you on your sunny plots, your hedges and evergreen jungle, when you go down to watch the apples falling in the pool. It is a golden maxim to cultivate the garden for the nose, and the eyes will take care of themselves. Nor must the ear be forgotten: without birds, a garden is a prison-yard. There is a garden near Marseilles on a steep hill-side, walking by which, upon a sunny morning, your ear will suddenly be ravished with a burst of small and very cheerful singing: some score of cages being set out there to sun their occupants. This is a heavenly surprise to any passer-by; but the price paid, to keep so many ardent and winged creatures from their liberty, will make the luxury too dear for any thoughtful pleasure-lover. There is only one sort of bird that I can tolerate caged, though even then I think it hard, and that is what is called in France the Bec-d'Argent. I once had two of these pigmies in captivity; and in the quiet, bare house

upon a silent street where I was then living, their song, which was not much louder than a bee's, but airily musical, kept me in a perpetual good-humour. I put the cage upon my table when I worked, carried it with me when I went for meals, and kept it by my head at night: the first thing in the morning these *maestrini* would pipe up. But these, even if you can pardon their imprisonment, are for the house. In the garden the wild birds must plant a colony, a chorus of the lesser warblers that should be almost deafening, a blackbird in the lilacs, a nightingale down the lane, so that you must stroll to hear it, and yet a little farther, tree-tops populous with rooks.

Your house should not command much outlook; it should be set deep and green, though upon rising ground, or, if possible, crowning a knoll, for the sake of drainage. Yet it must be open to the east, or you will miss the sunrise; sunset occurring so much later, you can go up a few steps and look the other way. A house of more than two stories is a mere barrack; indeed the ideal is of one story, raised upon cellars. If the rooms are large, the house may be small: a single room, lofty, spacious, and lightsome, is more palatial than a castleful of cabinets and cupboards. Yet size in a house, and some extent and intricacy of corridor, is certainly delightful to the flesh. The reception-room should be, if possible, a place of many recesses, which are "petty retiring-places for conference"; but it must have one long wall with a divan: for a day spent upon a divan, among a world of cushions, is as full of diversion as to travel. The eating-room, in the French mode, should be *ad hoc:* unfurnished, but with a buffet, the table, necessary chairs, one or two of Canaletto's etchings, and a tile fire-place for the winter. In neither of these public places should there be anything beyond a shelf or two of books; but the passages may be one library from end to end, and the stair, if there be one, lined with volumes in old leather, very brightly carpeted, and leading half-way

up, and by way of landing, to a windowed recess with a fireplace; this window, almost alone in the house, should command a handsome prospect. Husband and wife must each possess a studio; on the woman's sanctuary I hesitate to dwell, and turn to the man's. The walls are shelved waist-high for books, and the top thus forms a continuous table running round the wall. Above are prints, a large map of the neighbourhood, a Corot and a Claude or two. The room is very spacious, and the five tables and two chairs are but as islands. One table is for actual work; one close by for references in use; one, very large, for MSS. or proofs that wait their turn; one kept clear for an occasion; and the fifth is the map table, groaning under a collection of large-scale maps and charts. Of all books these are the least wearisome to read and the richest in matter; the course of roads and rivers, the contour-lines and the forests in the maps—the reefs, soundings, anchors, sailing-marks, and little pilot-pictures in the charts—and, in both, the bead-roll of names, make them of all printed matter the most fit to stimulate and satisfy the fancy. The chair in which you write is very low and easy, and backed into a corner; at one elbow the fire twinkles; close at the other, if you are a little inhumane, your cage of silver-bills are twittering into song.

Joined along by a passage, you may reach the great, sunny, glass-roofed, and tiled gymnasium, at the far end of which, lined with bright marble, is your plunge and swimming bath, fitted with a capacious boiler.

The whole loft of the house from end to end makes one undivided chamber; here are set forth tables on which to model imaginary countries in putty or plaster, with tools and hardy pigments; a carpenter's bench; and a spared corner for photography, while at the far end a space is kept for playing soldiers. Two boxes contain the two armies of some five hundred horse and foot; two others the ammunition of each side, and a fifth the foot-rules and the three colours

of chalk, with which you lay down, or, after a day's play, refresh the outlines of the country; red or white for the two kinds of road (according as they are suitable or not for the passage of ordnance), and blue for the course of the obstructing rivers. Here I foresee that you may pass much happy time; against a good adversary a game may well continue for a month; for with armies so considerable three moves will occupy an hour. It will be found to set an excellent edge on this diversion if one of the players shall, every day or so, write a report of the operations in the character of army correspondent.

I have left to the last the little room for winter evenings. This should be furnished in warm positive colours, and sofas and floor thick with rich furs. The hearth, where you burn wood of aromatic quality on silver dogs, tiled round with Bible pictures; the seats deep and easy; a single Titian in a gold frame; a white bust or so upon a bracket; a rack for the journals of the week; a table for the books of the year; and close in a corner the three shelves full of eternal books that never weary: Shakespeare, Molière, Montaigne, Lamb, Sterne, De Musset's comedies (the one volume open at Carmosine and the other at Fantasio); the Arabian Nights, and kindred stories, in Weber's solemn volumes; Borrow's Bible in Spain, the Pilgrim's Progress, Guy Mannering and Rob Roy, Monte Cristo, and the Vicomte de Bragelonne, immortal Boswell sole among biographers, Chaucer, Herrick, and the State Trials.

The bedrooms are large, airy, with almost no furniture, floors of varnished wood, and at the bed-head, in case of insomnia, one shelf of books of a particular and dippable order, such as Pepys, the Paston Letters, Burt's Letters from the Highlands, or the Newgate Calendar . . . (1884?)

III

NOTES ON THE MOVEMENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN

(1874)

I WISH to direct the reader's attention to a certain quality in the movements of children when young, which is somehow lovable in them, although it would be even unpleasant in any grown person. Their movements are not graceful, but they fall short of grace by something so sweetly humorous that we only admire them the more. The imperfection is so pretty and pathetic, and it gives so great a promise of something different in the future, that it attracts us more than many forms of beauty. They have something of the merit of a rough sketch by a master, in which we pardon what is wanting or excessive for the sake of the very bluntness and directness of the thing. It gives us pleasure to see the beginning of gracious impulses and the springs of harmonious movement laid bare to us with innocent simplicity.

One night some ladies formed a sort of impromptu dancing-school in the drawing-room of an hotel in France. One of the ladies led the ring, and I can recall her as a model of accomplished, cultured movement. Two little girls, about eight years old, were the pupils; that is an age of great interest in girls, when natural grace comes to its consummation of justice and purity, with little admixture of that other grace of forethought and discipline that will shortly supersede it altogether. In these two, particularly, the rhythm was sometimes broken by an excess of energy, as though

the pleasure of the music in their light bodies could endure no longer the restraint of regulated dance. So that, between these and the lady, there was not only some beginning of the very contrast I wish to insist upon, but matter enough to set one thinking a long while on the beauty of motion. I do not know that, here in England, we have any good opportunity of seeing what that is; the generation of British dancing men and women are certainly more remarkable for other qualities than for grace: they are, many of them, very conscientious artists, and give quite a serious regard to the technical parts of their performance; but the spectacle, somehow, is not often beautiful, and strikes no note of pleasure. If I had seen no more, therefore, this evening might have remained in my memory as a rare experience. But the best part of it was yet to come. For after the others had desisted, the musician still continued to play, and a little button between two and three years old came out into the cleared space and began to figure before us as the music prompted. I had an opportunity of seeing her, not on this night only, but on many subsequent nights; and the wonder and comical admiration she inspired was only deepened as time went on. She had an admirable musical ear; and each new melody, as it struck in her a new humour, suggested wonderful combinations and variations of movement. Now it would be a dance with which she would suit the music; now rather an appropriate pantomime, and now a mere string of disconnected attitudes. But whatever she did, she did it with the same verve and gusto. The spirit of the air seemed to have entered into her, and to possess her like a passion; and you could see her struggling to find expression for the beauty that was in her against the inefficacy of the dull, half-informed body. Though her footing was uneven and her gestures often ludicrously helpless, still the spectacle was not merely amusing; and though subtle inspirations of movement miscarried in tottering travesty, you could still see that they had

been inspirations; you could still see that she had set her heart on realising something just and beautiful, and that, by the discipline of these abortive efforts, she was making for herself in the future a quick, supple, and obedient body. It was grace in the making. She was not to be daunted by any merriment of people looking on critically; the music said something to her, and her whole spirit was intent on what the music said: she must carry out its suggestions, she must do her best to translate its language into that other dialect of the modulated body into which it can be translated most easily and fully.

Just the other day I was witness to a second scene, in which the motive was something similar; only this time with quite common children, and in the familiar neighbourhood of Hampstead. A little congregation had formed itself in the lane underneath my window, and was busy over a skipping-rope. There were two sisters, from seven to nine perhaps, with dark faces and dark hair, and slim, lithe little figures clad in lilac frocks. The elder of these two was mistress of the art of skipping. She was just and adroit in every movement; the rope passed over her black head and under her scarlet-stockinged legs with a precision and regularity that was like machinery; but there was nothing mechanical in the infinite variety and sweetness of her inclinations, and the spontaneous agile flexure of her lean waist and hips. There was one variation favourite with her, in which she crossed her hands before her with a motion not unlike that of weaving, which was admirably intricate and complete. And when the two took the rope together and whirled in and out with occasional interruptions, there was something Italian in the type of both—in the length of nose, in the slimness and accuracy of the shapes—and something gay and harmonious in the double movement, that added to the whole scene a Southern element, and took me over sea and land into distant and beautiful places. Nor was this impression lessened when the elder girl took in her arms

a fair-haired baby, and while the others held the rope for her, turned and gyrated, and went in and out over it lightly, with a quiet regularity that seemed as if it might go on for ever. Somehow, incongruous as was the occupation, she reminded me of Italian Madonnas. And now, as before in the hotel drawing-room, the humorous element was to be introduced; only this time it was in broad farce. The funniest little girl, with a mottled complexion and a big, damaged nose, and looking for all the world like any dirty, broken-nosed doll in a nursery lumber-room, came forward to take her turn. While the others swung the rope for her as gently as it could be done—a mere mockery of movement—and playfully taunted her timidity, she passaged backwards and forwards in a pretty flutter of indecision, putting up her shoulders and laughing with the embarrassed laughter of children by the water's edge, eager to bathe and yet fearful. There never was anything at once so droll and so pathetic. One did not know whether to laugh or to cry. And when at last she had made an end of all her deprecations and drawings back, and summoned up heart enough to straddle over the rope, one leg at a time, it was a sight to see her ruffle herself up like a peacock and go away down the lane with her damaged nose, seeming to think discretion the better part of valour, and rather uneasy lest they should ask her to repeat the exploit. Much as I had enjoyed the grace of the older girls, it was now just as it had been before in France, and the clumsiness of the child seemed to have a significance and a sort of beauty of its own, quite above this grace of the others in power to affect the heart. I had looked on with a certain sense of balance and completion at the silent, rapid, masterly evolutions of the eldest; I had been pleased by these in the way of satisfaction. But when little broken-nose began her pantomime of indecision I grew excited. There was something quite fresh and poignant in the delight I took in her imperfect movements. I remember, for instance, that I moved

my own shoulders, as if to imitate her: really, I suppose, with an inarticulate wish to help her out.

Now, there are many reasons why this gracelessness of young children should be pretty and sympathetic to us. And, first, there is an interest as of battle. It is in travail and laughable *fiasco* that the young school their bodies to beautiful expression, as they school their minds. We seem, in watching them, to divine antagonists pitted one against the other; and, as in other wars, so in this war of the intelligence against the unwilling body, we do not wish to see even the cause of progress triumph without some honourable toil; and we are so sure of the ultimate result, that it pleases us to linger in pathetic sympathy over these reverses of the early campaign, just as we do over the troubles that environ the heroine of a novel on her way to the happy ending. Again, people are very ready to disown the pleasure they take in a thing merely because it is big, as an Alp, or merely because it is little, as a little child; and yet this pleasure is surely as legitimate as another. There is much of it here; we have an irrational indulgence for small folk; we ask but little where there is so little to ask it of; we cannot overcome our astonishment that they should be able to move at all, and are interested in their movements somewhat as we are interested in the movements of a puppet. And again, there is a prolongation of expectancy when, as in these movements of children, we are kept continually on the very point of attainment and ever turned away and tantalised by some humorous imperfection. This is altogether absent in the secure and accomplished movements of persons more fully grown. The tight-rope walker does not walk so freely or so well as anyone else can walk upon a good road; and yet we like to watch him for the mere sake of the difficulty; we like to see his vacillations; we like this last so much even, that I am told a really artistic tight-rope walker must feign to be troubled in his balance, even if he is not so really. And again, we have in these baby efforts

an assurance of spontaneity that we do not have often. We know this at least certainly, that the child tries to dance for its own pleasure, and not for any by-end of ostentation and conformity. If we did not know it we should see it. There is a sincerity, a directness, an impulsive truth, about their free gestures that shows throughout all imperfection, and it is to us as a reminiscence of primitive festivals and the Golden Age. Lastly, there is in the sentiment much of a simple human compassion for creatures more helpless than ourselves. One nearly ready to die is pathetic; and so is one scarcely ready to live. In view of their future, our heart is softened to these clumsy little ones. They will be more adroit when they are not so happy.

Unfortunately, then, this character that so much delights us is not one that can be preserved by any plastic art. It turns, as we have seen, upon consideration not really æsthetic. Art may deal with the slim freedom of a few years later; but with this fettered impulse, with these stammering motions, she is powerless to do more than stereotype what is ungraceful, and, in the doing of it, lose all pathos and humanity. So these humorous little ones must go away into the limbo of beautiful things that are not beautiful for art, there to wait a more perfect age before they sit for their portraits.

IV

THE SATIRIST

MY companion enjoyed a cheap reputation for wit and insight. He was by habit and repute a satirist. If he did occasionally condemn anything or anybody who richly deserved it, and whose demerits had hitherto escaped, it was simply because he condemned everything and everybody. While I was with him he disposed of St. Paul with an epigram, shook my reverence for Shakespeare in a neat antithesis, and fell foul of the Almighty himself, on the score of one or two out of the ten commandments. Nothing escaped his blighting censure. At every sentence he overthrew an idol, or lowered my estimation of a friend. I saw everything with new eyes, and could only marvel at my former blindness. How was it possible that I had not before observed A's false hair, B's selfishness, or C's boorish manners? I and my companion, methought, walked the streets like a couple of gods among a swarm of vermin; for every one we saw seemed to bear openly upon his brow the mark of the apocalyptic beast. I half expected that these miserable beings, like the people of Lystra, would recognise their betters and force us to the altar; in which case, warned by the fate of Paul and Barnabas, I do not know that my modesty would have prevailed upon me to decline. But there was no need for such churlish virtue. More blinded than the Lycaonians, the people saw no divinity in our gait; and as our temporary godhead lay more in the way of observing than healing their infirmities, we were content to pass them by in scorn.

I could not leave my companion, not from regard or

even from interest, but from a very natural feeling, inseparable from the case. To understand it, let us take a simile. Suppose yourself walking down the street with a man who continues to sprinkle the crowd out of a flask of vitriol. You would be much diverted with the grimaces and contortions of his victims; and at the same time you would fear to leave his arm until his bottle was empty, knowing that, when once among the crowd, you would run a good chance yourself of baptism with his biting liquor. Now my companion's vitriol was inexhaustible.

It was perhaps the consciousness of this, the knowledge that I was being anointed already out of the vials of his wrath, that made me fall to criticising the critic, whenever we had parted.

After all, I thought, our satirist has just gone far enough into his neighbours to find that the outside is false, without caring to go farther and discover what is really true. He is content to find that things are not what they seem, and broadly generalises from it that they do not exist at all. He sees our virtues are not what they pretend they are; and, on the strength of that, he denies us the possession of virtue altogether. He has learnt the first lesson, that no man is wholly good; but he has not even suspected that there is another equally true, to wit, that no man is wholly bad. Like the inmate of a coloured star, he has eyes for one colour alone. He has a keen scent after evil, but his nostrils are plugged against all good, as people plugged their nostrils before going about the streets of the plague-struck city.

Why does he do this? It is most unreasonable to flee the knowledge of good like the infection of a horrible disease, and batten and grow fat in the real atmosphere of a lazar-house. This was my first thought; but my second was not like unto it, and I saw that our Satirist was wise, wise in his generation, like the unjust steward. He does not want light, because the darkness is more pleasant. He does not wish to see the

good, because he is happier without it. I recollect that when I walked with him, I was in a state of divine exaltation, such as Adam and Eve must have enjoyed when the savour of the fruit was still unfaded between their lips; and I recognise that this must be the man's habitual state. He has the forbidden fruit in his waistcoat pocket, and can make himself a god as often and as long as he likes. He has raised himself upon a glorious pedestal above his fellows; he has touched the summit of ambition; and he envies neither King nor Kaiser, Prophet nor Priest, content in an elevation as high as theirs, and much more easily attained. Yes, certes, much more easily attained. He has not risen by climbing himself, but by pushing others down. He has grown great in his own estimation, not by blowing himself out and risking the fate of Æsop's frog, but simply by the habitual use of a diminishing glass on everybody else. And I think altogether that his is a better, a safer, and a surer recipe than most others.

After all, however, looking back on what I have written, I detect a spirit suspiciously like his own. All through, I have been comparing myself with our Satirist, and all through, I have had the best of the comparison. Well, well, contagion is as often mental as physical; and I do not think my readers, who have all been under his lash, will blame me very much for giving the headsman a mouthful of his own sawdust.

V

NUITS BLANCHES

IF anyone should know the pleasure and pain of a sleepless night, it should be I. I remember, so long ago, the sickly child that woke from his few hours' slumber with the sweat of a nightmare on his brow, to lie awake and listen and long for the first signs of life among the silent streets. These nights of pain and weariness are graven on my mind; and so when the same thing happened to me again, everything that I heard or saw was rather a recollection than a discovery.

Weighed upon by the opaque and almost sensible darkness, I listened eagerly for anything to break the sepulchral quiet. But nothing came, save, perhaps, an emphatic crack from the old cabinet that was made by Deacon Brodie, or the dry rustle of the coals on the extinguished fire. It was a calm; or I know that I should have heard in the roar and clatter of the storm, as I have not heard it for so many years, the wild career of a horseman, always scouring up from the distance and passing swiftly below the window; yet always returning again from the place whence first he came, as though, baffled by some higher power, he had retraced his steps to gain impetus for another and another attempt.

As I lay there, there arose out of the utter stillness the rumbling of a carriage a very great way off, that drew near, and passed within a few streets of the house, and died away as gradually as it had arisen. This, too, was a reminiscence.

I rose and lifted a corner of the blind. Over the black belt of the garden I saw the long line of Queen

Street, with here and there a lighted window. How often before had my nurse lifted me out of bed and pointed them out to me, while we wondered together if, there also, there were children that could not sleep, and if these lighted oblongs were signs of those that waited like us for the morning.

I went out into the lobby, and looked down into the great deep well of the staircase. For what cause I know not, just as it used to be in the old days that the feverish child might be the better served, a peep of gas illuminated a narrow circle far below me. But where I was, all was darkness and silence, save the dry monotonous ticking of the clock that came ceaselessly up to my ear.

The final crown of it all, however, the last touch of reproduction on the pictures of my memory, was the arrival of that time for which, all night through, I waited and longed of old. It was my custom, as the hours dragged on, to repeat the question, "When will the carts come in?" and repeat it again and again until at last those sounds arose in the street that I have heard once more this morning. The road before our house is a great thoroughfare for early carts. I know not, and I never have known, what they carry, whence they come, or whither they go. But I know that, long ere dawn and for hours together they stream continuously past, with the same rolling and jerking of wheels and the same clink of horses' feet. It was not for nothing that they made the burthen of my wishes all night through. They are really the first throbbings of life, the harbingers of day; and it pleases you as much to hear them as it must please a shipwrecked seaman once again to grasp a hand of flesh and blood after years of miserable solitude. They have the freshness of the daylight life about them. You can hear the carters cracking their whips and crying hoarsely to their horses or to one another; and sometimes even a peal of healthy, harsh horse-laughter comes up to you through the darkness. There is now an end of mystery

and fear. Like the knocking at the door in *Macbeth*,[1] or the cry of the watchman in the *Tour de Nesle*, they show that the horrible cæsura is over and the nightmares have fled away, because the day is breaking and the ordinary life of men is beginning to bestir itself among the streets.

In the middle of it all I fell asleep, to be awakened by the officious knocking at my door, and I find myself twelve years older than I had dreamed myself all night.

[1] See a short essay of De Quincey's.

VI

THE WREATH OF IMMORTELLES

IT is all very well to talk of death as "a pleasant potion of immortality"; but the most of us, I suspect, are of "queasy stomachs," and find it none of the sweetest.[1] The graveyard may be cloak-room to Heaven; but we must admit that it is a very ugly and offensive vestibule in itself, however fair may be the life to which it leads. And though Enoch and Elias went into the temple through a gate which certainly may be called Beautiful, the rest of us have to find our way through Ezekiel's low-bowed door and the vault full of creeping things and all manner of abominable beasts. Nevertheless, there is a certain frame of mind to which a cemetery is, if not an antidote, at least an alleviation. If you are in a fit of the blues, go nowhere else. It was in obedience to this wise regulation that the other morning found me lighting my pipe at the entrance to Old Greyfriars', thoroughly sick of the town, the country, and myself.

Two of the men were talking at the gate, one of them carrying a spade in hands still crusted with the soil of graves. Their very aspect was delightful to me; and I crept nearer to them, thinking to pick up some snatch of sexton gossip, some "talk fit for a charnel,"[2] something, in fine, worthy of that fastidious logician, that adept in coroner's law, who has come down to us as the patron of Yaughan's liquor, and the very prince of gravediggers. Scots people in general are so much wrapped up in their profession that I had

[1] *Religio Medici*, Part ii.
[2] *Duchess of Malfi.*

a good chance of overhearing such conversation; the talk of fishmongers running usually on stock-fish and haddocks; while of the Scots sexton I could repeat stories and speeches that positively smell of the graveyard. But on this occasion I was doomed to disappointment. My two friends were far into the region of generalities. Their profession was forgotten in their electorship. Politics had engulfed the narrower economy of gravedigging. "Na, na," said the one, "ye're a' wrang." "The English and Irish Churches," answered the other, in a tone as if he had made the remark before and it had been called in question—"The English and Irish Churches have *impoverised* the country."

"Such are the results of education," thought I as I passed beside them and came fairly among the tombs. Here, at least, there were no commonplace politics, no diluted this-morning's leader, to distract or offend me. The old shabby church showed, as usual, its quaint extent of roofage and the relievo skeleton on one gable, still blackened with the fire of thirty years ago. A chill dank mist lay over all. The Old Greyfriars' churchyard was in perfection that morning, and one could go round and reckon up the associations with no fear of vulgar interruption. On this stone the Covenant was signed. In that vault, as the story goes, John Knox took hiding in some Reformation broil. From that window Burke the murderer looked out many a time across the tombs, and perhaps o' nights let himself down over the sill to rob some new-made grave. Certainly he would have a selection here. The very walks have been carried over forgotten resting-places; and the whole ground is uneven, because (as I was once quaintly told) "when the wood rots it stands to reason the soil should fall in," which, from the law of gravitation, is certainly beyond denial. But it is round the boundary that there are the finest tombs. The whole irregular space is, as it were, fringed with quaint old monuments, rich in death's-heads and scythes and hour-glasses, and doubly rich in pious

epitaphs and Latin mottoes—rich in them to such an extent that their proper space has run over, and they have crawled end-long up the shafts of columns and ensconced themselves in all sorts of odd corners among the sculpture. These tombs raise their backs against the rabble of squalid dwelling-houses, and every here and there a clothes-pole projects between two monuments its fluttering trophy of white and yellow and red. With a grim irony they recall the banners in the Invalides, banners as appropriate perhaps over the sepulchres of tailors and weavers as these others above the dust of armies. Why they put things out to dry on that particular morning it was hard to imagine. The grass was grey with drops of rain, the headstones black with moisture. Yet, in despite of weather and common sense, there they hung between the tombs; and beyond them I could see through open windows into miserable rooms where whole families were born and fed, and slept and died. At one a girl sat singing merrily with her back to the graveyard; and from another came the shrill tones of a scolding woman. Every here and there was a town garden full of sickly flowers, or a pile of crockery inside upon the window-seat. But you do not grasp the full connection between these houses of the dead and the living, the unnatural marriage of stately sepulchres and squalid houses, till, lower down, where the road has sunk far below the surface of the cemetery, and the very roofs are scarcely on a level with its wall, you observe that a proprietor has taken advantage of a tall monument and trained a chimney-stalk against its back. It startles you to see the red, modern pots peering over the shoulder of the tomb.

A man was at work on a grave, his spade clinking away the drift of bones that permeates the thin brown soil; but my first disappointment had taught me to expect little from Greyfriars' sextons, and I passed him by in silence. A slater on the slope of a neighbouring roof eyed me curiously. A lean black cat, looking as if it had battened on strange meats, slipped past me.

A little boy at a window put his finger to his nose in so offensive a manner that I was put upon my dignity, and turned grandly off to read old epitaphs and peer through the gratings into the shadow of vaults.

Just then I saw two women coming down a path, one of them old, and the other younger, with a child in her arms. Both had faces eaten with famine and hardened with sin, and both had reached that stage of degradation, much lower in a woman than a man, when all care for dress is lost. As they came down they neared a grave, where some pious friend or relative had laid a wreath of immortelles, and put a bell glass over it, as is the custom. The effect of that ring of dull yellow among so many blackened and dusty sculptures was more pleasant than it is in modern cemeteries, where every second mound can boast a similar coronal; and here, where it was the exception and not the rule, I could even fancy the drops of moisture that dimmed the covering were the tears of those who laid it where it was. As the two women came up to it, one of them kneeled down on the wet grass and looked long and silently through the clouded shade, while the second stood above her, gently oscillating to and fro to lull the puling baby. I was struck a great way off with something religious in the attitude of these two unkempt and haggard women; and I drew near faster, but still cautiously, to hear what they were saying. Surely on them the spirit of death and decay had descended: I had no education to dread here: should I not have a chance of seeing nature? Alas! a pawnbroker could not have been more practical and commonplace, for this was what the kneeling woman said to the woman upright—this and nothing more: "Eh, what extravagance!"

O nineteenth century, wonderful art thou indeed—wonderful, but wearisome in thy stale and deadly uniformity. Thy men are more like numerals than men. They must bear their idiosyncrasies or their professions written on a placard about their neck, like the scenery

in Shakespeare's theatre. Thy precepts of economy have pierced into the lowest ranks of life; and there is now a decorum in vice, a respectability among the disreputable, a pure spirit of Philistinism among the waifs and strays of thy Bohemia. For lo! thy very gravediggers talk politics; and thy castaways kneel upon new graves, to discuss the cost of the monument and grumble at the improvidence of love.

Such was the elegant apostrophe that I made as I went out of the gates again, happily satisfied in myself, and feeling that I alone of all whom I had seen was able to profit by the silent poem of these green mounds and blackened headstones.

VII

NURSES

I KNEW one once, and the room where, lonely and old, she waited for death. It was pleasant enough, high up above the lane, and looking forth upon a hillside, covered all day with sheets and yellow blankets, and with long lines of underclothing fluttering between the battered posts. There were any number of cheap prints, and a drawing by one of "her children," and there were flowers in the window, and a sickly canary withered into consumption in an ornamental cage. The bed, with its checkered coverlid, was in a closet. A great Bible lay on the table; and her drawers were full of "scones," which it was her pleasure to give to young visitors such as I was then.

You may not think this a melancholy picture; but the canary, and the cat, and the white mouse that she had for a while, and that died, were all indications of the want that ate into her heart. I think I know a little of what that old woman felt; and I am as sure as if I had seen her, that she sat many an hour in silent tears, with the big Bible open before her clouded eyes.

If you could look back upon her life, and feel the great chain that had linked her to one child after another, sometimes to be wrenched suddenly through, and sometimes, which is infinitely worse, to be torn gradually off through years of growing neglect, or perhaps growing dislike! She had, like the mother, overcome that natural repugnance—repugnance which no man can conquer—towards the infirm and helpless mass of putty of the earlier stage. She had spent her best and

happiest years in tending, watching, and learning to love like a mother this child, with which she has no connection and to which she has no tie. Perhaps she refused some sweetheart (such things have been), or put him off and off, until he lost heart and turned to someone else, all for fear of leaving this creature that had wound itself about her heart. And the end of it all—her month's warning, and a present perhaps, and the rest of the life to vain regret. Or, worse still, to see the child gradually forgetting and forsaking her, fostered in disrespect and neglect on the plea of growing manliness, and at last beginning to treat her as a servant whom he had treated a few years before as a mother. She sees the Bible or the Psalm-book, which with gladness and love unutterable in her heart she had bought for him years ago out of her slender savings, neglected for some newer gift of his father, lying in dust in the lumber-room or given away to a poor child, and the act applauded for its unfeeling charity. Little wonder if she becomes hurt and angry, and attempts to tyrannise and to grasp her old power back again. We are not all patient Grizzels, by good fortune, but the most of us human beings with feelings and tempers of our own.

And so in the end, behold her in the room that I described. Very likely and very naturally, in some fling of feverish misery or recoil of thwarted love, she has quarrelled with her old employers and the children are forbidden to see her or to speak to her; or at best she gets her rent paid and a little to herself, and now and then her late charges are sent up (with another nurse, perhaps) to pay her a short visit. How bright these visits seem as she looks forward to them on her lonely bed! How unsatisfactory their realisation, when the forgetful child, half wondering, checks with every word and action the outpouring of her maternal love! How bitter and restless the memories that they leave behind! And for the rest, what else has she?—to watch them with eager eyes as they go to school, to sit in

church where she can see them every Sunday, to be passed some day unnoticed in the street, or deliberately cut because the great man or the great woman are with friends before whom they are ashamed to recognise the old woman that loved them.

When she goes home that night, how lonely will the room appear to her! Perhaps the neighbours may hear her sobbing to herself in the dark, with the fire burnt out for want of fuel, and the candle still unlit upon the table.

And it is for this that they live, these quasi-mothers —mothers in everything but the travail and the thanks. It is for this that they have remained virtuous in youth, living the dull life of a household servant. It is for this that they refused the old sweetheart, and have no fireside or offspring of their own.

I believe in a better state of things, that there will be no more nurses, and that every mother will nurse her own offspring; for what can be more hardening and demoralising than to call forth the tenderest feelings of a woman's heart and cherish them yourself as long as you need them, as long as your children require a nurse to love them, and then to blight and thwart and destroy them, whenever your own use for them is at an end? This may be Utopian; but it is always a little thing if one mother or two mothers can be brought to feel more tenderly to those who share their toil and have no part in their reward.

VIII

A CHARACTER

THE man has a red, bloated face, and his figure is short and squat. So far there is nothing in him to notice, but when you see his eyes, you can read in these hard and shallow orbs a depravity beyond measure depraved, a thirst after wickedness, the pure disinterested love of Hell for its own sake. The other night, in the street, I was watching an omnibus passing with lit-up windows, when I heard some one coughing at my side as though he would cough his soul out; and turning round, I saw him stopping under a lamp, with a brown great-coat buttoned round him and his whole face convulsed. It seemed as if he could not live long; and so the sight set my mind upon a train of thought, as I finished my cigar up and down the lighted streets.

He is old, but all these years have not yet quenched his thirst for evil, and his eyes still delight themselves in wickedness. He is dumb; but he will not let that hinder his foul trade, or perhaps I should say, his yet fouler amusement, and he has pressed a slate into the service of corruption. Look at him, and he will sign to you with his bloated head, and when you go to him in answer to the sign, thinking perhaps that the poor dumb man has lost his way, you will see what he writes upon his slate. He haunts the doors of schools, and shows such inscriptions as these to the innocent children that come out. He hangs about picture-galleries, and makes the noblest pictures the text for some silent homily of vice. His industry is a lesson to ourselves. Is it not wonderful how he can triumph over his infirmities and do such an amount of harm without a

tongue? Wonderful industry—strange, fruitless, pleasureless toil? Must not the very devil feel a soft emotion to see his disinterested and laborious service? Ah, but the devil knows better than this: he knows that this man is penetrated with the love of evil and that all his pleasure is shut up in wickedness: he recognises him, perhaps, as a fit type for mankind of his satanic self, and watches over his effigy as we might watch over a favourite likeness. As the business man comes to love the toil, which he only looked upon at first as a ladder towards other desires and less unnatural gratifications, so the dumb man has felt the charm of his trade and fallen captivated before the eyes of sin. It is a mistake when preachers tell us that vice is hideous and loathsome; for even vice has her Hörsel and her devotees, who love her for her own sake.

IX

WELLINGTON

WITHIN easy memory of the fathers of our own generation, England possessed a man unique in history. The greatest of English soldiers, his sword had been sheathed for nearly fifty years; he had lived to be cheered by the children of those who were born on the day of his last engagement; the men who followed him to victory were becoming few and his hand began to go more rarely to the pocket, in which, with hourly generosity, he had always a guinea for a former comrade. He retired from the stage of the great wars covered with honours, a duke of England, a count of Portugal, a prince of Spain, a duke of Belgium; the most conspicuous man in Europe, since Napoleon, the previous observed of all observers, had fallen before his own stoutheartedness, and the loyalty of Marshal Blücher. Thereupon he entered the second period of his career, as the most despotic of English ministers capable in administration, not politically weather-wise, ruling with a rod of iron the pitiful monarch whom he was supposed to serve, and steadfastly indifferent to popularity.

With the Reform Bill, he fell from this half-royal power, and having so fallen, rose again almost at once to a fresh station in the regard of his countrymen, as the counsellor of all ministries and the recognised father of the fatherland; so that, while he lived, the people who had once broken his windows, escorted him about the city with salutes and fondly pointed him out to their young children; and when he came to die, the fall of the ministry at home and the bloody rise of an

empire across the Channel were alike forgotten in the blow of that national bereavement. It is proposed to study in these pages the qualities of mind and character by which he rose, and the nature of his singular devotion to the service of his country, or—as he preferred to put it, in words grown unfamiliar to our ears—the service of his King.

Martier, Bessières, and Desaix were born in the year 1768; Murat, Davoust, Duroc, Suchet, the Clausel, and Junot, the Archduke Charles and the Englishmen Beresford and Rowland Hill between 1770 and 1772; and it is the distinction of the intervening year 1769, to have given to the world Ney, Soult, Bonaparte, and Wellington. Thus, in the lapse of a lustre, there were born nearly a score of the men that grew more glorious in the long epic of the French Wars; and when the last shot was fired after Waterloo, the oldest of them still lacked some years of fifty.

Arthur Wellesley was the son of the second earl of Mornington. The Colley-Wellesleys, or the Cowley-Westleys (with other variants which I pass over) were a family of some standing in the matter of age. On the Irish side, their pedigree is graced with the names of several independent monarchs. It is more important that they were apparently related to the founders of Methodism; indeed it was as a Wesley that Arthur came into the world and grew to manhood, and the spelling was only changed to please the nice taste of the Marquess his brother. The stock at least was one of a certain virtue; they had pushed but recently into the Irish peerage, for certain services to the ministry which may be safely translated as the merging of votes; and Arthur's father was a man of taste and successfully cultivated that very graceful branch of music, once so popular, now seemingly so dead in England, the making of glees. The outbreak of artistic talent is usually the first sign of decay of the races; but with the house of Wellington this order was reversed, and the sons of the dilettante were men of action and affairs.

Out of a family of nine, four became peers in their own right.

It was no great position to be the sixth son of a mushroom Irish peer; and in 1781 Lord Mornington died, leaving his affairs in confusion, and the position was thus rendered worse. But in these houses of the poor nobility, there was a strong clan feeling, and what would now seem to us a great effrontery of nepotism. Richard, the new Lord Mornington (since famous as the Marquess Wellesley), took up the load of his father's and of his innumerable brothers and sisters with a good heart; and in one way and another he managed to carve out a position for them all. That the mother, a Hill of Seymour, must have been a woman of some stoicism, we may gather from the fact that she had forgotten the place of the birth of her first-born and both the place and date of that of Arthur. Perhaps dazzled by the parts and address of Richard she despaired of Arthur. He was a heavy, silent, sheepish, blank-faced lad; he displayed no taste for arms, nor indeed for anything but to play the fiddle; he made no friends, he was helplessly dull in society; and when a lady took him in her carriage to a picnic, she was so bored by the lad that she evaded him on the return, and the future duke drove back with the musicians. In after days he laughed with the lady over this incident.

What was to be done with this incubus—one of a very poor family ambitious to rise? He might now be clapped to a desk in a tea merchant's office or slapped upon a cattle ranch in Texas.

X

THE LATE SAM BOUGH, R.S.A.

A CUMBERLAND man, and born in the legendary city of Carlisle, Sam Bough (as he delighted to be called) died in Edinburgh on November 19, aged fifty-seven. This is not only a loss to art, but the disappearance of a memorable type of man. Spectacled, burly in his rough clothes, with his solid, strong, and somewhat common gait, his was a figure that commanded notice even on the street. He affected rude and levelling manners; his geniality was formidable, above all for those whom he considered too fine for their company; and he delivered jests from the shoulder like buffets. He loved to put himself in opposition, to make startling, and even brutal speeches, and trample proprieties under foot. But this, although it troubled the amenities of his relations, was no more than a husk, an outer man, partly of habit, partly of affectation; and inside the burr there was a man of warm feelings, notable powers of mind, and much culture, which was none the less genuine because it was not of the same character, not altogether concerned in the same fields of knowledge, as that training which usually appropriates the name. Perhaps he was a little disappointed with himself, and partly because he loathed fustian, partly because he did not succeed in living consistently up to the better and more beautiful qualities of his nature, he did himself injustice in the world, and paraded his worst qualities with something like a swagger. To borrow a metaphor from the stage with which he was so long connected, he preferred to play his worst part because he imagined he could play

it best. It was only when you got him alone, or when, in company, something occurred to call up a generous contempt, that you became clearly aware of his sterling, upright, and human character. Such manifestations his friends were as little willing to forget as he seemed shy of offering them. He would then display a sneering enmity for all that he thought mean or bad, and a quiet and genuine delight in all that he thought good. To students he was even exceptionally kind and helpful. He had an open hand, and came readily forth from his cynical out-works at any tale of sorrow. He had read much and wisely; and his talk was not only witty in itself, but enriched with the wit and eloquence of others. He played the violin, sang with spirit, and had a remarkable gift of telling stories. It was a delight to hear him when he spoke of Carlisle, Cumberland, and John Peel, the famous hunter; or when he narrated his own experience—cobbling shoes beside his father, gipsying among the moors to sketch, working in the docks as a porter, or painting scenes and sometimes taking a part at local theatres. As we say of books that they are readable, we may say of his talk that it was eminently *hearable*. He could broider romance into his narratives and you were none the wiser; they would all hold water; they had the grit and body of reality, the unity of a humorous masterpiece; and the talents of the novelist and the comedian were pressed together into the service of your entertainment.

His sentiment for nature was strong and just; but he avoided the subject in words and let his brush speak for him.

He was a massive, heavy painter, and liked broad effects of light. His colour was apt to be a little cold and dead. Yet he had a remarkable understanding of sunlight and certain aspects of summer atmosphere in the North, which perhaps lent themselves to the defect of his treatment. He was proud of his drawing and certainly rendered the significance of natural forms. Among his more important works in oil I may mention

Shipbuilding on the Clyde, Borrowdale, Canty Bay, St. Monans, Kirkwall and *London from Shooter's Hill.* But his name is more eminently connected with the practice of water-colours. The man's unshaken courage and great muscular power seem to have more directly found expression in this field. It was a sight to see him attack a sketch, peering boldly through his spectacles and, with somewhat tremulous fingers, flooding the page with colour; for a moment it was an indescribable hurly-burly, and then chaos would become ordered and you would see a speaking transcript: his method was an act of dashing conduct like the capture of a fort in war. I have seen one of these sketches in particular, a night-piece on a headland, where the atmosphere of tempest, the darkness and the mingled spray and rain, are conveyed with remarkable truth and force. It was painted to hang near a Turner; and in answer to some words of praise—"Yes, lad," said he, "I wasn't going to look like a fool beside the old man."

His activity was indefatigable; he worked from nature; he worked in the studio; even at home he would have a piece at his elbow to work upon in the intervals of music and conversation. By many it was supposed that this industry had a commercial motive, and injured the quality of his production; and it is true that Sam Bough was preoccupied about material necessities, and had a rooted horror of debt; but he thoroughly enjoyed his art, and, perhaps still more the practice of it; and although there was an impression of power in the man and his work that led hasty judgments to expect more than ever he accomplished, the best that he has left is probably the best that he could do.

XI

A NIGHT IN FRANCE

IN remote thickets towards afternoon, when the wind sounds now and again in the distance, and the butterflies are sown by faint airs here and there like thistledown (sown and carried away again by the faint airs of thistledown)——

The perfect southern moonlight fills the great night; along the coast the bare peaks faint and dwindle against the intense blue sky; and far up on the glimmering mountain sides the dark woods design their big full shapes in black fantastic profile. The sea trembles with light; white hotels and villas show lit windows far along the curved beach, and from above envy the silent stars. The strange night sky endues itself in monstrous space over all, the large moon beams forward. The still trees stand in relief aloof, one from the other with the light all about them, naked, bare, in the moonlight.

Up in the room the piano sounds and into the southern night, note follows note, chord follows chord, in quaint, sad, northland cadence. Do not the still trees wonder, and the flat bright sea, and the lonely glimmering hilltops far withdrawn into the purple sky? For there is no squeak of southern fife, no light melody of Provençal farandole; to these airs, brown feet never tripped on the warm earth, nor boatman cheered his way across deep midland waters. Wild and shrill, ring out the reels. Dumbarton drums beat bonny. The wind sounds over the rainy moorland; Wandering Willy is far from home. Clear sad voices sing in the grey dawn sadly; for a country made desolate, for the bold

silver that shall no more clatter forth in pay, and the good King that shall come home no more. The sun sets behind Ben Ledi. MacLeod's wizard flag sallies from the grey castle. Faint and fair in the misty summer afternoon reach out the purple braes, where the soft cloud shadows linger and dwindle. At home by the ingle the goodwife darns her goodman's grey breeks. And my love up in the North is like the red, red rose.

O sound of the wind among my own bleak hills! the snow and the cold, and the hard thin faces of steadfast serious people. The boats go out at even, under the moon; sail by sail they spread on the great uneven sea; at morn, in the rain plains, boat by boat comes back with its glittering burthen.

XII

A NOTE AT SEA

IN the hollow bowels of the ship I hear the ponderous engines pant and trample. The basin gasps and baulks like an uneasy sleeper, and I hear the broad bows tilt with the big billows, and the hollow bosom boom against solid walls of water, and the great sprays scourge the deck. Forward I go in darkness with all this turmoil about me. And yet I know that on deck —(and the whole ship plunges and leaps and sinks wildly forward into the dark) the white moon lays her light on the black sea, and here and there along the faint primrose rim of sky faint stars and sea lights shine. All is so quiet about us; yet here in the dark I lie besieged by ghostly and solemn noises. The engine goes with tiny trochees. The long ship makes on the billows a mad barbaric rhythm. The basin gasps when it suits it. My heart beats and toils in the dark mid-parts of my body; like as the engine in the ship, my brain toils.

XIII

PROTEST ON BEHALF OF BOER INDEPENDENCE

1881

I WAS a Jingo when Jingoism was in season, and I own I pall myself still of like passions with the Jingo. But, sir, it may be possible for you to understand that a man may be a Jingo and yet a man; that he may have been a Jingo from a sense, perhaps mistaken, of the obligations, the greatness, and the danger of his native land, and not from any brutal greed of aggrandisement or cheap love of drums and regimental columns. A man may love these also, and be honest. But there often comes a time and the changes of circumstances, when a man is pleased to have held certain opinions in the past, that he may denounce them with the more authority in the present. I was not ashamed to be the countryman of Jingoes; but I am beginning to grow ashamed of being the kin of those who are now fighting—I should rather say, who are now sending brave men to fight—in this unmanly Transvaal war. It is neither easy nor needful to justify these changes of opinion. We all awake somewhat late to a sense of what is just; and it is ordinarily by something merely circumstantial that the sense is awakened. A man may have been right or wrong before, but it adds some weight to his intense conviction if his former thoughts were of a different and even contrary spirit. Now, sir, I am at the present hour—in company, I am sure, with all the most honourable and considerate of my countrymen—literally grilling in my

own blood about this wicked business. It is no affair of ours if the Boers are capable of self-government or not; we have made it sufficiently plain to Europe of late days that we ourselves are not as a whole the most harmonious nation upon earth. That Colley and all his brave fellows are gone for ever, that we have been beaten, and fairly beaten, by the stalwart little state are not, to my mind, arguments for any prolongation of the war, but for an instant, honourable submission. We are in the wrong, or all that we profess is false; blood has been shed, glory lost, and, I fear, honour also. But if any honour yet remains or any chivalry, that is certainly the only chivalrous or honourable course, for the strong to accept his buffet and do justice, already tardy, to the weak whom he has misused and who has so crushingly retorted. Another Majuba Hill, with the result reversed, and we shall treat, I hear; but that may be long of coming; and in the meanwhile, many of our poor soldiers—many of them true patriots—must fall. There may come a time in the history of England—for that is not yet concluded—when she also shall come to be oppressed by some big neighbour; and if I may not say there is a God in heaven, I may say at least there is a justice in the chain of causes that shall make England drain a bucket of her best blood for every drop she now exacts from the Transvaal. As if, sir, there were any prestige like the prestige of being just; or any generosity like that of owning and repairing an injustice; as if in this troubled time, and with all our fair (?) and plucky history, there were any course left to this nation but to hold back the sword of vengeance and bare the head to that state, possibly enough misguided, whom we have tried ineffectually to brutalise!

STEVENSON'S
COMPANION TO THE COOK BOOK

ADORNED WITH A CENTURY OF AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES

Originally published, *Vailima Edition,* Vol. XXVI.

STEVENSON'S COMPANION TO THE COOK BOOK

ADORNED WITH A CENTURY OF AUTHENTIC ANECDOTES

Dear Sir:

Your attention is called and your contributions respectfully solicited to the above work, the culinary part of which is all contracted for, while the more important (because more literary) department of the *Authentic Anecdotes* presents some inconsiderable lacunæ. A small specimen list of six names is inclosed: all or any of which, if you shall find time and the Muse favourable, you might perhaps be tempted to illustrate with some of the productions of your pen. Some specimens are added, not to guide the refinement of your taste (which certainly requires no guidance) but to supply you with some notion of the limitations of our space. If your anecdotes should touch at all upon food, or even introduce the names of dishes, they would be (if possible) more welcome. Your Disinterestedness (so prominent a feature in your admirable character) will rejoice to hear that no emolument is offered; your well-known Modesty will learn with gratification that your name will not appear, unless you would allow us to introduce your initials into a list of contributions on a flyleaf; and that unaffected Sociability (which so elegantly crowns the solid monument of your virtues and attainments) will possibly incline you to entertain with favour a last proposition, that you should dine at the editor's expense with the other contributors (all

scarce less distinguished than yourself) on the day of publication.

I have the pleasure to be,
Dear Sir,
Your lively admirer
THE EDITOR.

.....ESQ.

I

FIELDING AND RICHARDSON

WHILE Clarissa was still publishing, it chanced that Mr. Fielding and Mr. Richardson encountered in the inn at Hounslow, where (as they were the only guests) the author of *Joseph Andrews* proposed to the creator of *Pamela* that they should bury their animosity and share in the expense of dinner. Mr. Richardson consented; and the bottle being generously pressed, he became a little warmed with liquor and spoke boastfully of his success, his unequalled fame, and the letters which he continually received from fair, and sometimes from noble correspondents, begging him to spare Clarissa.

"God forbid I should be behind the age!" cries Mr. Fielding. "Let me seize the opportunity, and beg you (as you would pass for a man of gallantry) to spare the lady."

"You jest," returned Mr. Richardson. "But to my sensible correspondents, it is no jesting matter. I assure you my bookshop is besieged with supplicants, many of them dissolved in tears; and I cannot receive an invitation to a dish of tea, but it is made conditional upon my sparing Clarissa."

"This must make your life very distasteful?" inquired Mr. Fielding.

"The price of glory," replied Mr. Richardson modestly. "These are pleasant pains."

The talk continued very much in the same channels; and the two rivals, except for a brief absence on the part of Mr. Fielding, kept it up in company until the day began to fail. The bill was then called for, and

the expense divided. There was some change coming to Mr. Richardson.

"Come, sir," says he to the waiter, "give me my change."

"Only upon one condition," said the waiter: "that you spare Clarissa."

"Mr. Fielding," said Mr. Richardson, "this is of your procuring. It is you who have set this fellow to make a mock of me."

"D——n the fellow! I know nothing by him," returned Mr. Fielding. "He did indeed ask me who you was, and I told him; but for anything else, I think he must have got it from the Duke of Cumberland who changed horses here an hour ago."

At the door of the inn, Mr. Fielding (being the better mounted and pretending some affair in town) excused himself to Mr. Richardson and rode ahead. The other followed at a more sober pace; and twice upon the way, found a reminder of his facetious rival. A turnpikeman declined to open the gate, unless he would spare Clarissa; and a little after on a piece of heath, a horseman rode up to him, clapped a pistol to his head, demanded his money or his life, and then, appearing to bethink himself—"But you are Mr. Richardson, are you not?" said he. "In that case, I desire no money —only that you should spare Clarissa."

At this juncture a noise of troops approaching on the road put the literary highwayman to a retreat; and Mr. Richardson was delivered from his alarms, though not from his annoyance. He reached home at last, a great deal wearied, went early to bed, fell soon asleep, and was awoke about two in the morning by a concourse of very harsh and tuneless singers, many of whom appeared to be in liquor. For near upon two hours, these musicians continued to bray at the pitch of their voices: *Spare us Clarissa, Richardson O!* to the tune of Lillibullero; and it is possible they might have continued all night, but for an irascible neighbour who menaced them from his window with a blunderbuss.

The next morning the whole street was in a hubbub over this nocturnal nuisance; and many persons and the gentleman of the blunderbuss in particular, came to the bookshop and complained with much asperity of what they had endured. Mr. Richardson was yet engaged in mollifying one of the last of these, when a street singer struck up before his place of business *Spare us Clarissa, Richardson O!* and he must run to his door and purchase the man's departure. Ten minutes after, a second must be bought off; inside of half an hour, a third and fourth had made their appearance; and yet a little later, the first, having already expended his gratuity in drink, returned to the attack. At this Mr. Richardson was so transported out of himself by the tittering of his own shopmen and the open laughter of his neighbours, that he ran headlong out of his house and struck the perfidious musician in the face. The singer returned the blow; there arose an instant hubbub; and before Mr. Richardson could at all collect his spirits, he was being borne along in custody, without hat or wig and with a bloody nose, toward the Westminster Police Court. Mr. Fielding was upon the bench; he heard the musician's story, and cried out upon the monstrous character of the assault.

"But you have not yet heard me," cried Mr. Richardson. "I insist on being heard."

"I will hear you with pleasure, Mr. Richardson," replied the author of *Tom Jones*. "But upon one condition: that you spare Clarissa."

II

LAURENCE STERNE

A YOUNG blood from Cambridge chanced to enter the inn at Chipping Norton, while Sterne was seated there at dinner. The student carried at his heels a certain rustic following, in whose eyes he would fain represent the manners of the city; and spying a shrivelled parson engaged with a poor dinner, he thought the occasion suitable with his design.

"Sir," he said, marching up to the table, "I do not like your face."

"That is a pity," said Mr. Sterne, "for I like yours."

"I perceive you set up to be a wit," said the young man.

"No, sir. Only a Christian," said Mr. Sterne.

"You cannot pretend to take any pleasure in this dinner," said the student, changing his ground. "Come, be done, be done with it, and do not keep me waiting."

"Whence is your hurry?" inquired the parson.

"Because when you are done, I presume you will say grace; and I have a curiosity to hear you canting."

Mr. Sterne instantly laid down his knife and fork, and stood up with a reverent demeanour.

"Lord," said he, "look down upon thy two poor creatures, met here together in the worst inn (among all thy various works) that I can ever remember to have visited; and grant, Lord, unto each, that of which he stands so much in need—to me, digestion: to him, manners."

III

ROBERT BURNS

ON the way, Burns and Nichol were overtaken by a storm of rain, took refuge in a wayside inn beside the Blair, and passed some hours of the afternoon in drinking Athole Brose. It was the first time the poet had tasted the confection: he inquired exactly as to its constituents, and going to the window, looked out with an abstracted countenance into the falling rain.

Nichol, accustomed to the habits of his illustrious friend, had the curiosity to time him. In less than twenty minutes, the poet returned to the table, called for pen and ink, and wrote, in his large, characteristic handwriting and with the even rapidity of one copying, the following ingenious trifle. The original is in the possession of Mr. Niven of Pittendrum, and the stump of the pen was recently purchased by that well-known collector of Burnsiana, Mr. Dall of Inverkirtling.

ATHOLE BROSE

Willie an' I cam doun by Blair
  And in by Tullibardine,
The Rye were at the waterside,
  An' bee-skeps in the garden.
I saw the reck of a private still—
  Says I, "Gud Lord, I thank ye!"
As Willie and I cam in by Blair
  And out by Killiekrankie.

Ye hinny bees, ye smuggler lads,
  Thou, Muse, the bard's protector,
I never kent what Rye was for
  Till I had drunk the nectar!

And shall I never drink it mair?
Gud troth, I beg your pardon!
The neiest time I come doun by Blair
And in by Tullibardine.

IV

JUDGE JEFFRIES

COME, Mr. Pepys, you are a very legal gentleman, and enjoy his Majesty's countenance, which makes it the more outrageous you should appear to bolster up so rotten a cause. But I will save your reputation in spite of yourself. I will screw the truth out of you, Mr. Pepys of the Navy Office! You say you had been to the *King's Head?*"

"Yes, my Lord."

"It would be a mighty strange thing, Mr. Pepys, that you should go into a house of public entertainment and not call for something!"

"My Lord, I had a dish of eggs, a smoked tongue and a cup of small ale."

"So, sir! I am pleased to hear you are so frugal in your manner. But this was upon your animal. What had you at your riding? What calls did you make upon the way? Gentlemen of the jury, I will save this gentleman's reputation in spite of his truth; I will show you him so befogged with meat and fuddling that his testimony is not worth a tinker's. Come, sir, what had you at your riding?"

"There was a roasted pig at my own table, of which I partook in moderation."

"The Lord Chief Justice partook in moderation, quotha! Gentlemen of the Jury, if they had sent us the whole Navy Office to swear upon so nice a point, and I found they had each been guttling upon roasted pig, I could direct you to exclude their testimony."

STATE TRIALS, Vol. VII.

V

ST. ATHANASIUS

I AM tempted to relate an anecdote, trifling in itself, but which represents in a more genial character the energetic features of the defender of orthodoxy. The Saint, in the course of one of his precipitate and mysterious retreats, arrived in the monastic island of Tabeune; he was scarce come to land ere the rude horn of the monastery was winded to give notice of the approach of his pursuers; and Athanasius perceived he must proceed with incessant diligence to some more retracted quarters of the desert. A boat was hastily fitted for the river, and the Abbot, coming to announce its readiness, found his illustrious guest seated in the sand in the cell of a lay brother, and staying his appetite with a mess of eggs and some green salad. Such was indeed the austere ordinary of the monks; but it was their pride to entertain the orthodox fugitive even with profusion; and the Abbot expressed his apologies and regrets for what he deemed a stain upon the credit of the holy island.

"I have not dined so well amid the luxuries of Alexandria," said Athanasius. "You may think it difficult," he added, "to make a creed like mine. I assure you," laying his hand on the shoulder of the lay brother, "it is more difficult to make an omelette like this."

GILLEN, Vol. III, p. 217.

VI

JOHN KNOX AND THE ALMONER OF THE GALLEY

THE oars of the galley were manned with the dregs of France, wretches devoted to the gallows, robbers from the forest and pirates from the sea; these along with their innocent companion, alternately toiled half-naked in the rain and spray or crowded to slumber in a dismal and infectious hold; the food was scantily sufficient to support the waste of so laborious a life; and to complete this picture of misfortune, the ship was pursued through the extent of the North Sea with inclement and contrarious gales. Late in September she swept within distant view of the towers of St. Andrews. According to one account, the day was Sunday, and (the land wind then blowing pretty strong) the ears of Knox were tantalised with the sound of the church bells. The day following, it fell a calm; and the slaves being all exhausted with the long continuance of heavy weather, the captain was minded to lie idle within half a mile of the Bell Rock.

The Almoner of the galley, chancing to pass among the slaves as they were suffered to sit and sun themselves upon the forward deck, paused before Knox and began to twit him with his heresy and servile punishment.

"There," said he, "is your own country; but yesterday we passed before the spires of a university where you once publicly taught; and this is the last bitterness of your punishment, doubtless vouchsafed you in mercy, that you should behold these native places from the seat of slavery, as the rich man in the parable saw

heaven from hell. Even that rock is Scottish; and I daresay you regard it with eyes of longing."

"I will never deny that," replied the reformer; "and the rock one that you would review yourself with some respect, if you were anyway acquainted with its history. For it was the scene and it is still a monument of useful piety."

The Almoner's curiosity prompted him to inquire further: and Knox related the story of the Abbot of Arbroath, how he had planted a bell upon that dangerous reef, then called the Inchcape, how for nine years the bell had served its charitable end, and how it was at last torn down and flung into the sea by a notorious pirate.

"I will remember the soul of that good abbot in my prayers!" exclaimed the Almoner.

"Well, well," said the reformer, "it can never be laid to my charge, if you wrest even this innocent history into a means of damnation."

The priest was extremely incensed by the remark.

"You think yourself so low that you can fall no lower," said he, "but I will prove to you you are mistaken."

With these words he hastened to the Captain of the galley, professed a curiosity to explore the reef, and requested permission to visit it in one of the skiffs and to take Knox among his rowers. The skiff was accordingly prepared; the reformer and three other galley slaves descended grumbling to their places; and the Almoner seized the rudder and steered for the Bell Rock.

"Knox," said he, as soon as they were out of hearing of the ship, "let this be a lesson to you to restrain your superfluity of naughtiness. You may thank your own foul tongue, if your day of rest has been denied you."

The landing was more than usually easy; a little search discovered one of the stanchions of the bell, and the Almoner knelt upon the weeds in prayer, while

Knox and the other galley slaves aroused their impatience and perhaps their hunger with the eating of dulse. In the midst of these occupations, they were all amazed to observe a bustle on the deck of the galley and (presently after) the sea to whiten about the oar blades and the prow. To the watcher at the masthead, a ship, which was still invisible to the landing party on the reef, had appeared on the horizon. The Almoner desisted from his prayers.

"I profess, Master Knox," said he, "the *Notre-Dame* appears to draw away from us."

"Non magister sum, sum servus," returned the reformer.

"No," cried the priest, "not so, Master Knox—the tonsure is indelible. But did you not say the reef was to be presently submerged?"

"Within one poor half hour, we shall be standing to our chins," replied Knox.

The Almoner, who was a clerk of a small stature, devoutly crossed himself, "Get me then incontinently to the skiff," said he. The skiff lay in a weedy inlet between shelves, and as the landing party drew near, they were concerned to observe it nearly filled with water.

"My friends!" cried the Almoner. "What may this betoken?"

One of the slaves scrambled on board.

"The plug is gone, and we are all dead men," cried he with an oath.

"Jesus-Maria!" cried the Almoner. "My excellent friends! Can nothing be done? Here be five men all very fitted for a career of usefulness which may be here nipped in the bud within a quarter of an hour. Beseech you, my dear friends, bethink yourselves! There must be one among you with some tincture of sea-discipline."

"Jack-priest," interrupted the apostle of Scotland, "leave us no longer with your lamentations. I can and will prolong the career of usefulness of a priest,

a condemned heretic and three private murderers; but you will have to thank your own foul tongue for it."

"What do you mean, Mr. Knox?" inquired the Almoner. "I will refuse you nothing."

"It is well," said the reformer. "I will then repair the boat for you, after you shall have said with a loud voice: *A black end to the Pope!*"

"Never!" cried the Almoner; "rather a thousand deaths!" And sitting down, he fell to his beads.

Knox on his part returned with a good appetite to his gathering of dulse.

The tide continued insensibly to rise; and presently the water flowed into the shoes of one of the three galley slaves, who leaped up with an imprecation.

"What fools we are," cried he, "to drown for a pair of shavelings!"

The three fell at once into an agreement, seized the stretchers and turned first in the direction of the reformer. But Knox had armd himself with the boat's tiller which he carried under his arm as he picked his dulse, and he regarded them with so resolute an eye that they diverted their rebellion on the priest. Surrounding him with upraised stretchers, "Say what the gentleman bids you!" they cried.

"My beloved friends," wailed the priest, "would you plunge me in deadly sin?"

"Hear him!" cried one of the slaves. "He is going to damn four souls in order to save his own! There's charity and mercy!"

"God forgive me," cried the Almoner, "you remind me of my duty. I will proceed at once to give you absolution; and nobody need be damned except the Scotchman."

But the galley slaves were in no spirit to accept the compromise; they fell upon the priest incontinently and, in spite of his own supplications and the continual mounting of the tide, alternately threatened and mauled him with their stretchers. All this time Knox was picking and eating his dulse on the most elevated shelf

of the Bell Rock. At last, when the reef was almost wholly covered and the slaves and the unfortunate priest were struggling to the knees in water, he called upon them with a loud voice:

"Enough!" he cried. "I have no more mind to drown than the worst of you, all the less as this may very well prove the occasion of our escape. Here is the plug, which I had all the while in my pocket; and let us bale the boat."

To this necessary labour, all addressed themselves, even the priest, who could not stir without a groan; and so vigorous were their exertions that in the space of a few minutes they floated safely on the smooth surface of the sea.

A fog had begun to arise; the galley was quite lost to view, the coast of Angus already grew obscure, the voice of an approaching gale sounded in their ears; and by common consent of the galley slaves, eager to escape, and of the priest concerned for his existence, the head of the skiff was directed for the Scottish shore. But the utmost diligence of the rowers was prevented by the expedition of the gale, which burst with uncommon fury on their unprotected heads; the rest of that day and the whole of the succeeding night, they fled before the seas at random without food or compass; and by the first light of the dawn which they had impatiently expected ran the skiff upon a sandy beach enclosed with hillocks The reformer, who was well acquainted with that part of Scotland, instantly recognised their refuge for the Isle of May, a spot inhabited only by the monks of the priory, all bigoted Romanists and the declared enemies of his own person. In this difficulty, he artfully professed himself ignorant of their position; but as he was the strongest of the party, having made a full meal of the dulse, and was besides in his own land, he volunteered his services to go in quest of food and information. The scheme was accepted; the reformer presented himself at the priory door, described himself as a fisher blown from one of the neigh-

bouring towns of Fife, and returned to his companions on the beach with a whole haggis and a liberal supply of oaten bread. "God be praised, Master Knox!" said the Almoner. "That is one thing very proper to be said before a meal," returned the reformer with a smile; "but there is another equally needful which you seem to have forgotten."

"What is that?" asked the priest.

"*Black end to the Pope!*" said the apostle of Scotland.

"*Vade retro, Sathanus!*" cried the priest.

"At your own pleasure," said Knox. "Those gentlemen and I will fall to in the meanwhile at the haggis."

The Almoner at first civilly expostulated; pressing his companions to continue to eat, he rose into a higher strain, threatening the terrors of the church; and when these were received with indifference, involved himself ever more in his own dignity, and sat down to his beads. The haggis, which smelt very savoury, was two thirds gone before his courage melted; even then, his tongue proved so rebellious, that he must three times repeat the hated formula, before his tormentor declared him satisfied and he was suffered to take his part of the delicious pudding.

"And now," said Knox, "are you not a singular sort of saint? That you could suffer stripes and face the loss of life, and that all your constancy should fly away at the smell of some onions and sheep's tripes?"

The Almoner was now in a more happy temper; he answered with a smile: "There is a text, *The life is more than meat*, which I have always conceived to be a mistranslation. Meat is surely more than life, since it offers a great deal of excellent diversion in the bargain."

"Fie, fie," cried the reformer, "this is heresy; for just such freedoms am I tugging an oar in a galley."

"It is very true," replied the Almoner, "and I recall my emend. But do you sincerely wonder at my inconsistency?"

" It speaks of a belly-god religion," said the reformer.

" You think then," rejoined the priest, " that I ought to be more afraid of going to heaven than of missing breakfast? "

" It is very merrily said and very truly," cried the reformer. " Here is another helping for the word."

The galley, which had been driven like themselves into the Firth, overtook them in the course of the forenoon, some way beneath the isle of Fidra; but the Almoner, with some magnanimity, made no complaint of his companions.

STEVENSON AT PLAY

WAR CORRESPONDENCE FROM STEVENSON'S NOTE-BOOK

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PREFACE

By Lloyd Osbourne

IN an old note-book, soiled and dog-eared by much travelling, yellow and musty with the long years it had lain hid in a Samoan chest, the present writer came across the mimic war correspondence here presented to the public. The stirring story of these tin-soldier campaigns occupies the greater share of the book, though interspersed with many pages of scattered verse, not a little Gaelic idiom and verb, a half-made will and the chaptering of a novel. This game of tin soldiers, an intricate "Kriegspiel," involving rules innumerable, prolonged arithmetical calculations, constant measuring with foot-rules, and the throwing of dice, sprang from the humblest beginnings—a row of soldiers on either side and a deadly marble. From such a start it grew in size and complexity until it became mimic war indeed, modelled closely upon real conditions and actual warfare, requiring, on Stevenson's part, the use of text-books and long conversations with military invalids; on mine, all the pocket-money derived from my publishing ventures as well as a considerable part of my printing stock in trade.

The abiding spirit of the child in Stevenson was seldom shown in more lively fashion than during those days of exile at Davos, where he brought a boy's eagerness, a man's intellect, a novelist's imagination, into the varied business of my holiday hours; the printing press, the toy theatre, the tin soldiers all engaged his attention. Of these, however, the tin soldiers most took his fancy; and the war game was constantly improved and elaborated, until from a few hours a "war" took

weeks to play, and the critical operations in the attic monopolised half our thoughts. The attic was a most chilly and dismal spot, reached by a crazy ladder, and unlit save for a single frosted window; so low at the eaves and so dark that we could seldom stand upright, nor see without a candle. Upon the attic floor a map was roughly drawn in chalks of different colours, with mountains, rivers, towns, bridges, and roads of two classes. Here we would play by the hour, with tingling fingers and stiffening knees, and an intentness, zest, and excitement that I shall never forget. The mimic battalions marched and counter-marched, changed by measured evolutions from column formation into line, with cavalry screens in front and massed supports behind, in the most approved military fashion of to-day. It was war in miniature, even to the making and destruction of bridges, the entrenching of camps, good and bad weather, with corresponding influence on the roads, siege and horse artillery proportionately slow, as compared to the speed of unimpeded foot and proportionately expensive in the upkeep; and an exacting commissariat added the last touch of verisimilitude. Four men formed the regiment or unit, and our shots were in proportion to our units and amount of ammunition. The troops carried carts of printer's "ems"—twenty "ems" to each cart—and for every shot taken an "em" had to be paid into the base, from which fresh supplies could be slowly drawn in empty carts returned for the purpose. As a large army often contained thirty regiments, consuming a cart and a half of ammunition in every engagement (not to speak of the heavy additional expense of artillery), it will be seen what an important part the commissariat played in the game, and how vital to success became the line of communication to the rear. A single cavalry brigade, if bold and lucky enough, could break the line at the weakest link, and by cutting off the sustenance of a vast army could force it to fall back in the full tide of success. A well-devised flank attack, the plucky destruction of

a bridge, or the stubborn defence of a town, might each become a factor in changing the face of the war and materially alter the course of campaigns.

It must not be supposed that the enemy ever knew your precise strength, or that he could divine your intentions by the simple expedient of looking at your side of the attic and counting your regiments. Numerous numbered cards dotted the country wherever the eye might fall; one, perhaps, representing a whole army with supports, another a solitary horseman dragging some ammunition, another nothing but a dummy that might paralyse the efforts of a corps, and overawe it into a ruinous activity. To uncover these cards and unmask the forces for which they stood was the duty of the cavalry vedettes, whose movements were governed by an elaborate and most vexatious set of rules. It was necessary to feel your way amongst these alarming pasteboards to obtain an inkling of your opponent's plans, and the first dozen moves were often spent in little less. But even if you were befriended by the dice, and your cavalry broke the enemy's screen and uncovered his front, you would learn nothing more than could reasonably be gleaned with a field-glass. The only result of a daring and costly activity might be such meagre news as "the road is blocked with artillery and infantry in column" or "you can perceive light horse-artillery strongly supported." It was only when the enemy began to take his shots that you would begin to learn the number of his regiments, and even then he often fired less than his entitled share in order to maintain the mystery of his strength.

If the game possessed a weakness, it was the unshaken courage of our troops, who faced the most terrific odds and endured defeat upon defeat with an intrepidity rarely seen on the actual field. An attempt was made to correct this with the dice, but the innovation was so heart-breaking to the loser, and so perpetual a menace to the best-laid plans, that it had perforce to be given up. After two or three dice-box panics our

heroes were permitted to resume their normal and unprecedented devotion to their cause, and their generals breathed afresh. There was another defect in our "Kriegspiel": I was so much the better shot that my marksmanship often frustrated the most admirable strategy and the most elaborate of military schemes. It was in vain that we—or rather my opponent—wrestled with the difficulty and tried to find a substitute for the deadly and discriminating pop-gun. It was all of no use. Whatever the missile—sleeve-link, marble, or button—I was invariably the better shot, and that skill stood me in good stead on many an ensanguined plain, and helped to counteract the mental inequality between a boy of twelve and a man of mature years. A wise discretion ruled with regard to the *personnel* of the fighting line. Stevenson possessed a horde of particularly chubby cavalrymen, who, when marshalled in close formation at the head of the infantry, could bear unscathed the most accurate and overwhelming fire, and thus shelter their weaker brethren in the rear. This was offset by his "Old Guard," whose unfortunate peculiarity of carrying their weapons at the charge often involved whole regiments in a common ruin. On my side there was a multitude of flimsy Swiss, for whom I trembled whenever they were called to action. These Swiss were so weak upon their legs that the merest breath would mow them down in columns, and so deficient in stamina that they would often fall before they were hurt. Their ranks were burdened, too, with a number of egregious puppets with musical instruments, who never fell without entangling a few of their comrades.

Another improvement that was tried and soon again given up was an effort to match the sickness of actual war. Certain zones were set apart as unwholesome, especially those near great rivers and lakes, and troops unfortunate enough to find themselves in these miasmic plains had to undergo the ordeal of the dice-box. Swiss or Guards, musicians, Arabs, chubby cavalrymen or

thin, all had to pay death's toll in a new and frightful form. But we rather overdid the miasma, so it was abolished by mutual consent.

The war which forms the subject of the present paper was unusual in no respect save that its operations were chronicled from day to day in a public press of Stevenson's imagination, and reported by daring correspondents on the field. Nothing is more eloquent of the man than the particularity and care with which this mimic war correspondence was compiled; the author of the *Child's Garden* had never outgrown his love for childish things, and it is typical of him that, though he mocks us at every turn and loses no occasion to deride the puppets in the play, he is everywhere faithful to the least detail of fact. It must not be supposed that I was privileged to hear these records daily read and thus draw my plans against the morrow; on the contrary they were sometimes held back until the military news was staled by time or were guardedly communicated with blanks for names and the dead unnumbered. Potty, Pipes, and Piffle were very real to me, and lived like actual people in that dim garret. I can still see them through the mist of years; the formidable General Stevenson, corpulent with solder, a detachable midget who could be mounted upon a fresh steed whenever his last had been trodden under foot; whose frame gave evidence of countless mendings; the emaciated Delafield, with the folded arms, originally a simple artilleryman, but destined to reach the highest honours; Napoleon, with the flaming clothes, whom fate had bound to a very fragile horse; Green, the simple patriot, who took his name from his coat; and the redoubtable La Fayette in blue, alas! with no Washington to help him.

The names of that attic country fall pleasantly upon the ear and brighten the dark and bloody page of war: Scarlet, Glendarule, Sandusky, Mar, Tahema, and Savannah; how sweetly they run! I must except my own (and solitary) contribution to the map, Samuel City,

which sounds out of key with these mouthfuls of melody, though none the less an important point. Yallobally I shall always recall with bitterness, for it was there I first felt the thorn of a vindictive press. The reader will see what little cause I had to love the *Yallobally Record,* a scurrilous sheet that often made my heart ache, for all I pretended to laugh and see the humour of its attacks. It was indeed a relief when I learned I might exert my authority and suppress its publication—and even hang the editor—which I did, I fear with unseemly haste. It will be noticed that the story of the war begins on the tenth day, the earlier moves being without interest save to the combatants themselves, passed as they were in uncovering the cards on either side; and in learning, with more or less success, the forces for which they stood. This was an essential but scarcely stirring branch of tin-soldiering, and has been accordingly unreported as too tedious even for the columns of the *Yallobally Record.* When the veil had been somewhat lifted and the shadowy armies discerned with some precision, the historian takes his pen and awaits the clash of arms.

STEVENSON AT PLAY

WAR CORRESPONDENCE FROM STEVENSON'S NOTE-BOOK

GLENDARULE TIMES.—10th. *Scarlet.*—"The advance of the enemy continues along three lines, a light column moving from Tahema on Grierson, and the main body concentrating on Garrard from the Savannah and Yallobally roads. Garrard and Grierson have both been evacuated. A small force, without artillery, is alone in the neighbourhood of Cinnabar, and some of that has fallen back on Glentower by the pass. The brave artillery remains in front of Scarlet, and was reinforced this morning with some ammunition. All day infantry has been moving eastward on Sandusky. The greatest depression prevails."

Editorial Comment.—General Stevenson may, or may not, be a capable commander. It would be unjust to pronounce in the meantime. Still, the attempt to seize Mar was disastrously miscalculated, and, as we all know, the column has fallen back on Sandusky with cruel loss. Nor is it possible to deny that the attempt to hold Grierson, and keep an army in the west, was idle. Our correspondent at Scarlet mentions the passage of troops moving eastward through that place, and the retreat of another column on Glentower. These are the last wrecks of that Army of the West, from which great things were once expected. With the exception of the Yolo column, which is without guns, all our forces are now concentrated in the province of Sandusky; Blue Mountain Province is particularly deserted, and nothing has been done to check, even for

an hour, the advance of our numerous and well-appointed foes.

11th. *Scarlet.*—The horse-artillery returned through Scarlet on the Glendarule road; hideous confusion reigns; were the enemy to fall upon us now, the best opinions regard our position as hopeless. Authentic news has been received of the desertion of Cinnabar.

Sandusky.—The enemy has again appeared, threatening Mar, and the column moving to the relief of the Yolo column has stopped in its advance in consequence. General Stevenson moved out a column with artillery, and crushed a flanking party of the enemy's great centre army on Scarlet, Garrard, and Savannah road; no loss was sustained on our side; the enemy's loss is officially calculated at four hundred killed or wounded.

Scarlet.—At last the moment has arrived. The enemy, with a strong column of horse and horse-artillery, occupied Grierson this morning. This, with his Army of the Centre moving steadily forward upon Garrard, places all the troops in and around this place in imminent danger of being entirely cut off, or being forced to retreat before overwhelming forces across the Blue Mountains, a course, according to all military men, involving the total destruction of General Potty's force. Piffle's whole corps, with the heavy artillery, continued its descent on the left bank of the Sandusky river, while Potty, dashing through Scarlet at the hand-gallop, and among the cheers of the populace, moved off along the Grierson road, collecting infantry as he moved, and riding himself at the head of the horse-artillery.

Note.—General Potty was an airy, amiable, affected creature, the very soul of bravery and levity. He had risen rapidly by virtue of his pleasing manners; but his application was small, and he lacked self-reliance at the council board.

Piffle called him a parrot; he returned the compliment by calling Piffle "the hundred-weight of bricks." They were scarce on speaking terms.

Half an hour after, he had driven the foreguard of

the enemy out of Grierson without the loss of a trooper on our side; the enemy's loss is reckoned at 1600 men. I telegraph at this juncture before returning to the field. So far the work is done; Potty has behaved nobly. But he remains isolated by the retreat of Piffle, with a large force in front, and another large force advancing on his unprotected flank.

Editorial Comment.—We have been successful in two skirmishes, but the situation is felt to be critical, and is by some supposed to be desperate. Stevenson's skirmish on the 11th did not check the advance of the Army of the Centre; it is impossible to predict the result of Potty's success before Grierson. The Yolo column appears to meet with no resistance; but it is terribly committed, and is, it must be remembered, quite helpless for offensive purposes, without the co-operation of Stevenson from Sandusky. How far that can be managed, while the enemy holds the pass behind Mar, is more than we can see. Some shrewd, but perhaps too hopeful, critics perceive a deep policy in the inactivity of our troops about Sandusky, and believe that Stevenson is luring on the cautious Osbourne to his ruin. We will hope so; but this does not explain Piffle's senseless counter-marchings around Scarlet, nor the horribly outflanked and unsupported position of Potty on the line of the Cinnabar river. If General Osbourne were a child, we might hope for the best; there is no doubt that he has been careless about Mar and Yolo, and that he was yesterday only saved from a serious disaster by a fluke; and the imperfection of our scout system; but the situation to the west and centre wears a different complexion; there his steady, well-combined advance, carrying all before him, contrasts most favourably with the timid and divided counsels of our Stevensons, Piffles and Pottys.

YALLOBALLY *Record.*—"That incompetent shuffler, General Osbourne, has again put his foot into it. Blundering into Grierson with a lot of unsupported horse, he has got exactly what he deserved. The whole com-

mand was crushed by that wide-awake fellow, Potty, and a lot of guns and ammunition lie ignominiously deserted on our own side of the river. All this through mere chuckle-headed incompetence and the neglect of the most elementary precautions, within a day's march of two magnificent armies, either of which, under any sane, soldierly man, is capable of marching right through to Glendarule.

"This is the last scandal. Yesterday, it was a whole regiment cut off between the Garrard road and the Sandusky river, and cut off without firing or being able to fire a single shot in self-defence. It is an open secret that the men behind Mar are starving, and that the whole east and the city of Savannah are within a day of being deserted. How long is this disorganisation to go on? How long is that bloated bondholder to go prancing round on horseback, wall-eyed and muddle-headed, while his men are starved and butchered, and the forces of this great country are at the mercy of clever rogues like Potty, or respectable mediocrities like Stevenson?"

"General Piffle's force was, I learn, attacked this morning from across the river by the whole weight of the enemy's centre. Supports were being hurried forward. Ammunition was scarce. A feeling of anxiety, not unmixed with hope, is the rule."

Noon.—I am now back in Scarlet, as being more central to both actions now raging, one along the line of the Sandusky between General Pifile and the Army of the Centre, the other toward Grierson between Potty and the corps of Generals Green and La Fayette. News has come from both quarters. Piffle, who was at one time thought to be overwhelmed, has held his ground on the Sandusky high-road: and by last advices his whole supports had come into line, and he hoped, by a last effort, to carry the day. His losses have been severe; they are estimated at 2600 killed and wounded; but it appears from the reports of captives that the enemy's losses must amount to 3000 at least. The fate

of the engagement still trembles in the balance. From the battle at Grierson, the news is both encouraging and melancholy. The enemy has once more been driven across the rivers, and even some distance behind the town of Grierson itself on the Tahema road; he has certainly lost 2400 men, principally horse; but he has succeeded in carrying off his guns and ammunition in the face of our attacks, and his immense reserves are close at hand. Both Green and La Fayette are sent wounded to the rear; it is unknown who now commands their column. These successes, necessary as they were felt to be; were somewhat dearly purchased. Two thousand six hundred men are *hors de combat;* and the chivalrous Potty is himself seriously hurt. This has cast a shade of anxiety over our triumph; and though the light column is still pushing its advantage under Lieutenant-General Pipes, it is felt that nothing but a complete success of the main body under Piffle can secure us from the danger of complete investment.

14th. *Scarlet.*—The engagement ended last night by the complete evacuation of Grierson. Pipes cleared the whole country about that town in splendid style, and the army encamped on the field of battle; sadly reduced indeed, but victorious for the moment. The enemy, since his first appearance at Grierson, has lost 4400 men, and has been beaten decisively back. There is now not a man on our side of the Sandusky; and our loss of 2600 is serious indeed, but, seeing how much has been accomplished, not excessive. The enemy's horse was cut to pieces.

Piffle slept on the ground that he had held all day. In the afternoon he had once more driven back the head of the enemy's columns, inflicting a further loss of 3200 killed and wounded at the lowest computation; but the enemy's camp-fires can still be plainly made out with a field-glass, in the same position as the night before. This is scarcely to be called success, although it is certainly not failure.

Sandusky.—All quiet at Sandusky, the army has

fallen back into the city, and large reserves are still massed behind.

Editorial Comment.—The battle of Grierson is a distinct success; the enemy, with a heavy loss, has been beaten back to his own side. As to the vital engagement on the Sandusky and the heavy fighting before Yolo, it is plain that we must wait for further news of both. In neither case has any decided advantage crowned our arms, and if we are to judge by the expressions of the commander-in-chief to our Sandusky correspondent, the course of the former still leaves room for the most serious apprehensions. General Potty, we are glad to assure our readers, will be once more in the saddle before many days. It is an odd coincidence that all the principal commanders in the battle of Grierson were at one period or another of the day carried to the rear; and that none of the three is seriously hurt. Green and La Fayette were shot down, it appears, within a few moments of each other. It was reported that they had been having high words as to the reckless advance over the Sandusky, each charging the blame upon the other; but it seems certain the fault was La Fayette's, who was in chief command, and was present in Grierson itself at the time of the fatal manœuvre. The result would have been crushing, had not General Potty been left for some hours utterly without ammunition; Commissary Scuttlebutt is loudly blamed. To-morrow's news is everywhere awaited with an eagerness approaching to agony.

15th. *Scarlet.*—Late last night, orders reached General Pipes to fall back, on this place, where his reserves were diverted to support Piffle, hard pressed on the Sandusky. This morning the manœuvre was effected in good order, the enemy following us through Grierson and capturing one hundred prisoners. The battle was resumed on the Sandusky with the same fury; and it is still raging as I write. The enemy's Army of the Centre is commanded, as we learn from stragglers, by General Napoleon; it boasts of large sup-

ports arriving, both from Savannah and Tahema directions. The slaughter is something appalling; the whole of Potty's infantry corps has marched to support Piffle; and as we have now no more men within a day's ride, it is feared the enemy may yet manage to carry Garrard and command the line of the river.

Sandusky. — This morning, General Stevenson marched out of town to the southward on the Savannah and Sandusky road. It was fully expected that he would have mounted the Sandusky river to support Piffle and engage the enemy's Army of the Centre on the flank; and the present manœuvre is loudly criticised. Not only is the integrity of the line of the Sandusky ventured, but Stevenson's own force is now engaged in a most awkward country with a difficult bridge in front. To add, if possible, to our anxiety, it is reported that General Delafield, in yesterday's engagement, lost 3200 men, killed and wounded. He held his ground, however, and by the last advices had killed 800 and taken 1400 prisoners, with which he had fallen back again on Yolo itself. This retrogression, it seems, is in accordance with his original orders; he was either to hold Yolo, or if possible advance on Savannah via Brierly. This last he judged unwise, so that he was obliged to cling to Yolo itself. This also is seriously criticised in the best-informed circles. Osbourne himself is reported to be in Savannah.

Yallobally *Record.*—" We have never concealed our opinion that Osbourne was a bummer and a scallywag; but the entire collapse of his campaign beats the worst that we imagined possible. We have received, at the same moment, news of Green and La Fayette's column being beaten ignominiously back again across the Sandusky river and out of Grierson, a place on our own side; and next of the appearance of a large body of troops at Yolo, in the very heart of this great land, where they seem to have played the very devil, taking prisoners by the hundred and marching with arrogant footsteps on the sacred soil of the province of Savan-

nah. General Napoleon, the only commander who has not yet disgraced himself, still fights an uphill battle in the centre, inflicting terrific losses and upholding the honour of his country single-handed. The infamous Osbourne is shaking in his spectacles at Savannah. He was roundly taken to task by a public-spirited reporter, and babbled meaningless excuses; he did not know, he said, that the force now falling in on us at Yolo was so large. It was his business to know. What is he paid for? That force has been ten days at least turning the east of the Mar Mountains, a week at least on our own side of the frontier. Where were Osbourne's wits? Will it be believed, the column at Lone Bluff is again short of ammunition? This old man of the sea, whom all the world knows to be an ass and whom we can prove to be a coward, is apparently a peculator also. If we were to die to-morrow, the word 'Osbourne', would be found engraven backside foremost on our hearts."

NOTE. *The Tergiversation of the Army of the West.*—The delay of the Army of the West, and the timorous counsels of Green and La Fayette, were the salvation of Potty, Pipes, and Piffle. This is the third time we hear of this great army crossing the river. It never should have left hold. La Fayette had an overwhelming force at his back; and with a little firmness, a little obstinacy even, he might have swallowed up the thin lines opposed to him. On this day, the 16th, when we hear of his leaving Grierson for the third time, his headquarters should have been in Scarlet, and his guns should have enfiladed the weak posts of Piffle.

Sandusky. Noon.—Great gloom here. As every one predicted, Stevenson has already lost 600 men in the marshes at the mouth of the Sandusky, men simply sacrificed. His wilful conduct in not mounting the river, following on his melancholy defeat before Mar, and his long and fatal hesitation as to the Armies of the West and Centre, fill up the measure of his incapacity. His uncontrolled temper and undisguised in-

civility, not only to the Press, but to fellow-soldiers of the stamp of Piffle, have alienated from him even the sympathy that sometimes improperly consoles demerit.

Editorial.—We leave our correspondents to speak for themselves, reserving our judgment with a heavy heart. Piffle has the sympathy of the nation.

Scarlet. 9 P.M.—The attack has ceased. Napoleon is moving off southward. Our fellows smartly pursued and cut off 1600 men; in spreading along the other side of the Sandusky they fell on a flanking column of the enemy's Army of the West and sent it to the right-about with a loss of 800 left upon the field. This shows how perilously near to a junction these two formidable armies were, and should increase our joy at Napoleon's retreat. That movement is variously explained, but many suppose it is due to some advance from Sandusky.

Sandusky. 8 P.M.—Stevenson this afternoon occupied the right angle between the Glendarule and the Sandusky; his guns command the Garrard and Savannah high-road, the only line of retreat for General Napoleon's guns, and he has already hopelessly defeated and scattered a strong body of supports advancing from Savannah to the aid of that commander. The enemy lost 1600 men; it is thought that this success and Stevenson's present position involve the complete destruction or the surrender of the enemy's Army of the Centre. The enemy has retired from the passes behind Mar; but it is thought he has moved too late to save Savannah. Pleasant news from General Delafield, who, with a loss of 600, has destroyed thrice that number of the enemy before Yolo.

17th. *Scarlet.*—The enemy turned last night, inflicting losses on the combined forces of Generals Pipes and Piffle, amounting together to 1600 men. But his retreat still continues, harassed by our cavalry and guns. The rest of the troops out of Cinnabar have arrived, via Glentower, at the foot of the Blue Moun-

tains. Every one is in high spirits. Potty has resumed command of his divisions; I met him half an hour ago at lunch, when he expressed himself delighted with the campaign.

Sandusky.—A great victory must be announced. To-day Stevenson passed the Sandusky, and occupied the right bank of the Glendarule and the country in front of Savannah. General Napoleon in full retreat upon that place, found himself cut off, and, after a desperate struggle, in which 2600 fell, surrendered with 6000 men. The wrecks of his army are scattered far and wide, and his guns are lying deserted on the Garrard road. At the very moment while Napoleon was surrendering his sword to General Stevenson, the head of our column cut off 1400 men before Savannah, which was under the fire of our guns, and destroyed a convoy on the Mar and Savannah high-road. This completes the picture; the enemy has now only one bridge over the Glendarule not swept by our artillery. Delafield has had another partial success; with a loss of 1000 he has cut off 1200 and made 400 prisoners, but a strong force is reported on the Yolo and Yallobally road, which, by placing him between two fires, may soon render his hold on the Yolo untenable.

Note.—General Napoleon. His real name was Clamborough. The son of a well-known linen-draper in Yolo, he was educated at the military college of Savannah. His chief fault was an overwhelming vanity, which betrayed itself in his unfortunate assumption of a pseudonym, and in the gorgeous Oriental costumes by which he rendered himself conspicuous and absurd. He received early warning of Stevenson's advance from Sandusky, but refused to be advised, and did not begin to retreat until his army was already circumvented. A characteristic anecdote is told of the surrender. "General," said Napoleon to his captor, "you have to-day immortalised your name." "Sir," returned Stevenson, whose brutality of manner was already proverbial, "if you had taken as much trouble to direct

your army as your tailor to make your clothes, our positions might have been reversed."

Editorial Comment.—Unlike many others, we have never lost confidence in General Stevenson; indeed, as our readers may remember, we have always upheld him as a capable, even a great commander. Some little ruffle at Scarlet did occur, but it was, no doubt, chargeable to the hasty Potty; and now, by one of the finest manœuvres on record, the head general of our victorious armies has justified our most hopeful prophecies and aspirations. There is not, perhaps, an officer in the army who would not have chosen the obvious and indecisive move up the Sandusky, which even our correspondent, able as he is, referred to with apparent approval. Had Stevenson done that, the brave enemy who chooses to call himself Napoleon might have been defeated twelve hours earlier, and there would have been less sacrifice of life in the divisions of Potty and the ignorant Piffle. But the enemy's retreat would not have been cut off; his general would not now have been a prisoner in our camp, nor would our cannon, advanced boldly into the country of our foes, thunder against the gates of Savannah and cut off the supplies from the army behind Mar.—A glance at the map will show the authority of our position; not a loaf of bread, not an ounce of powder can reach Savannah or the enemy's Army of the East, but it must run the gauntlet of our guns. And this is the result produced by the turning movement at Yolo, General Stevenson's long inactivity in Sandusky, and his advance at last, the one right movement and in the one possible direction.

Yallobally *Record.*—"The humbug who had the folly and indecency to pick up the name of Napoleon second-hand at a sale of old pledges, has been thrashed and is a prisoner. Except the Army of the West, and the division on the Mar road, which is commanded by an old woman, we have nothing on foot but scattered, ragamuffin regiments. Savannah is under fire; that will

teach Osbourne to skulk in cities instead of going to the front with the poor devils whom he butchers by his ignorance and starves with his peculations. What we want to know is, when is Osbourne to be shot?"

NOTE.—The *Record* editor, a man of the name of M'Guffog, was subsequently hanged by order of General Osbourne. Public opinion endorsed this act of severity. My great-uncle, Mr. Phelim Settle, was present and saw him with the nightcap on and a file of his journal around his neck; when he was turned off, the applause, according to Mr. Settle, was deafening. He was a man, as the extracts prove, not without a kind of vulgar talent.

YALLOBALLY *Evening Herald*.—"It would be idle to disguise the fact that the retreat of our Army of the Centre, and the accidental capture of the accomplished soldier whose modesty conceals itself under the pseudonym of Napoleon, have created a slight though baseless feeling of alarm in this city. Nearer the field the troops are quite steady, the inhabitants enthusiastic, and the loyal and indefatigable Osbourne multiplies his bodily presence. The events of yesterday were much exaggerated by some papers, and the publication of one rowdy sheet, suspected of receiving pay from the enemy, has been suspended by an order from headquarters. Our Army of the West still advances triumphantly unresisted into the heart of the enemy's country; the force at Yolo, which is a mere handful and quite without artillery, will probably be rooted out to-morrow. Addresses and congratulations pour in to General Orbourne; subscriptions to the great testimonial Osbourne statue are received at the *Herald* office every day between the hours of 10 and 4."

ABSTRACT OF SIX DAYS' FIGHTING, FROM THE 19TH TO THE 24TH, FROM THE GLENDARULE *Times* SATURDAY SPECIAL.—"This week has been, on the whole, unimportant; there are few changes in the aspect of the field of war, and perhaps the most striking fact is the collapse of General Delafield's Yolo column. Fourteen

hundred killed and eighteen hundred prisoners is assuredly a serious consideration for our small army; yet the good done by that expedition is not wiped away by the present defeat; large reinforcements of troops and much ammunition have been directed into the Far East, and the city of Savannah and the enemy's forces in the pass have thus been left without support. Delafield himself has reached Mar, now in our hands, and the cavalry and stores of the expedition, all safe, are close behind him. Yolo is a name that will never be forgotten. Our forces are now thus disposed: Potty, with the brave artillery, lies behind the south-east shoulder of the Blue Mountains, on the Sandusky and Samuel City road; Piffle, with the Army of the Centre, has fallen back into Sandusky itself; while Stevenson still holds the same position across the Sandusky river, his advance to which will constitute his chief claim to celebrity. Savannah was bombarded from the 18th to the 20th, inclusive; 4000 men fell in its defence. Osbourne himself, directing operations, was seriously wounded, and sent to Yallobally: and on the evening of the 20th the city surrendered, only 600 men being found within its walls. A heavy contribution was raised: but the general himself, fearing to expose his communications, remains in the same position and has not even occupied the fallen city.

"In the meantime the army from the pass has been slowly drawing down to the support of Savannah, suffering cruelly at every step. Yesterday (24th) Mar was occupied by a corps of our infantry, who fell on the rear of the retreating enemy, inflicting heavy loss."

NOTE.—Retreat of the Mar column. The army which so long and so usefully held the passes behind Mar, over the neck of Lone Bluff, did not begin to retreat until the enemy had already occupied Mar and begun to engage its outposts. Supplies had already been cut off by the advanced position of Stevenson. The men were short of bread. The roads were heavy; the horses starving. The rear of the column was continually and

disastrously engaged with the enemy pouring after. It is perhaps the saddest chapter in the history of the war. My grandmother, Mrs. Hankey (*née* Pillworthy), then a young girl on a mountain farm on the line of the retreat, distinctly remembers giving a soda biscuit, which was greedily received, to Colonel Diggory Jacks, then in command of our division, and lending him an umbrella, which was never returned. This incident, trivial as it may be thought, emphatically depicts the destitution of our brave soldiers.

In the meantime, in the west, the enemy is slowly passing the rivers and advancing with his main body on Scarlet, and with a single corps on Glentower. Cinnabar was occupied on the 21st in the morning, and a heavy contribution raised. The situation may thus be stated: In the centre we are the sole arbiters, commanding the roads and holding a position which can only be described as authoritative. In the east, Delafield's corps has been destroyed; but the enemy's army of the pass, on the other hand, is in a critical position and may, in the course of a few days or so, be forced to lay down its arms. In the west, nothing as yet is decided, and the movement through the Glentower Pass somewhat hampers General Potty's position.

The comparative losses during these days are very encouraging, and compare pleasingly with the cost of the early part of the campaign. The enemy has lost 12,800 men, killed, wounded, and prisoners, as against 4800 on our side.

Yallowbally *Herald*.—Interview from General Osbourne with a special reporter.—"I met the wounded hero some miles out of Yallobally, still working, even as he walked, and surrounded by messengers from every quarter. After the usual salutations, he inquired what paper I represented, and received the name of the *Herald* with satisfaction. 'It is a decent paper,' he said. 'It does not seek to obstruct a general in the exercise of his discretion.' He spoke hopefully of the west and east, and explained that the collapse of our

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centre was not so serious as might have been imagined. 'It is unfortunate,' he said, 'but if Green succeeds in his advance on Glendarule, and if our army can continue to keep up even the show of resistance in the province of Savannah, Stevenson dare not advance upon the capital; that would expose his communications too seriously for such a cautious and often cowardly commander. I call him cowardly,' he added, 'even in the face of the desperate Yolo expedition, for you see he is withdrawing all along the west, and Green, though now in the heart of his country, encounters no resistance.' The General hopes soon to recover; his wound, though annoying, presents no character of gravity."

NOTE.—General Osbourne's perfect sincerity is doubtful. He must have known that Green was hopelessly short of ammunition. "Unfortunate," as an epithet describing the collapse of the Army of the Centre, is perhaps without parallel in military criticism. It was not unfortunate, it was ruinous. Stevenson was a man of uneven character, whom his own successes rendered timid; this timidity it was that delayed the end; but the war was really over when General Napoleon surrendered his sword on the afternoon of the 17th.

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